

THE BETROTHAL

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE BLUE BIRD

OUR ETERNITY

MARY MAGDALENE

DEATH

THE UNKNOWN GUEST

THE WRACK OF THE STORM

THE TREASURE OF THE HUMBLE

WISDOM AND DESTINY

THE LIFE OF THE BEE

THE BURIED TEMPLE

THE DOUBLE GARDEN

LIFE AND FLOWERS

AGLAVAINÉ AND SÉLYSETTE

MONNA VANNA

JOYZELLE

SISTER BEATRICE; AND ARDIANE

AND BARBE BLEUE

PELLÉAS AND MÉLISANDE

MY DOG

OLD-FASHIONED FLOWERS

HOURS OF GLADNESS

POEMS

THE MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTHONY

THE BURGOMASTER OF STILEMONDE

THE BETROTHAL OR THE BLUE BIRD CHOOSES

A FAIRY PLAY IN FIVE ACTS
BEING A SEQUEL TO THE BLUE BIRD

BY
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CHARACTERS

(arranged in the order of their entrance on the stage)

TYLTYL

THE FAIRY BÉRYLUNE

MILETTE (*the Wood-cutter's Daughter*)

BELLINE (*the Butcher's Daughter*)

ROSELLE (*the Inn-keeper's Daughter*)

AIMETTE (*the Miller's Daughter*)

JALLINE (*the Beggar's Daughter*)

ROSARELLE (*the Mayor's Daughter*)

JOY (*the Veiled Girl, or the White Phantom*)

DESTINY

THE MISER

LIGHT

SOME USUAL THOUGHTS

GRANNY TYL

GAFFER TYL

THE GREAT MENDICANT

THE GREAT PEASANT

The Betrothal

THE RICH ANCESTOR

THE SICK ANCESTOR

THE DRUNKEN ANCESTOR

THE MURDERER ANCESTOR

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

OTHER ANCESTORS

SOME OF TYLTYL'S "ME'S"

VARIOUS CHILDREN IN THE ABODE OF
THE CHILDREN

THE FIVE LITTLE ONES

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL

MUMMY TYL

MYTYL

DADDY TYL

THE NEIGHBOUR

SCENES

Act I., Scene 1—The Wood-cutter's
Cottage

Act II., Scene 1—Outside the Door
Scene 2—The Miser's Cave
Scene 3—The Closet in the
Fairy's Palace
Scene 4—A Ballroom in the
Fairy's Palace

Act III., Scene 1—Before the Curtain
representing Rocks
Scene 2—The Abode of the
Ancestors

Act IV., Scene 1—Before the Curtain
representing the
Milky Way
Scene 2—The Abode of the
Children

Act V., Scene 1—Before the Curtain
representing the
Edge of a Forest
Scene 2—The Awakening

THE BETROTHAL

Or, THE BLUE BIRD CHOOSES

ACT I

SCENE I.—*The Wood-cutter's Cottage*

The cottage-scene in The Blue Bird: the interior of a wood-cutter's cabin, simple and rustic in appearance, but in no way poverty-stricken. A recessed fireplace containing the dying embers of a wood-fire. Kitchen-utensils, a cupboard, a bread-pan, a grandfather's clock, a spinning-wheel, a water-tap, etc. A dog and a cat asleep. A large blue-and-white sugar-loaf. On the wall hangs a round cage containing a blue bird. At the back, two windows with closed shutters. On the left is the front door, with a big latch to it. A ladder leads up to a

The Betrothal ;

loft. But there is only one bed, TYLTYL's; he is now sixteen years of age. It is dark; the scene is lit only by a few moonbeams which filter through the shutters. TYLTYL is sound asleep. A knock at the door.

TYLTYL (*waking with a start*)

Who's there? (*Another knock.*) Wait till I put on my breeches. The door's bolted. I'll come and open it.

THE FAIRY (*behind the door*)

Don't trouble, don't trouble! . . . It's only me! . . . How do you do? (*The door has opened of its own accord and THE FAIRY BERYLUNE enters under the guise of an old woman, as in the first scene of The Blue Bird. At the same time the room is filled with a strange brightness, which remains after the door is closed again.*)

TYLTYL (*in surprise*)

Who are you?

THE FAIRY

Don't you know me? Why, Tytyl, it's

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

hardly seven years since we said good-bye to each other.

TYLTYL (*bewildered and vainly searching his memory*)

Yes, yes, I remember . . . and I know what you mean. . . .

THE FAIRY

Yes, but you don't quite grasp who I am and you don't remember anything at all. You haven't changed, I see : just the same careless, ungrateful, wool-gathering little fellow that you always were! . . . But you have grown taller and stronger, my lad, and quite handsome! If I were not a fairy, I should never have known you! Yes, really quite handsome! . . . But are you aware of it? It doesn't seem to have occurred to you!

TYLTYL

We only had one tiny looking-glass in the house, about as big as your hand. Mytyl took it and keeps it in her room.

The Betrothal ;

THE FAIRY

So Mytyl has a room of her own now ?

TYLTYL

Yes, she sleeps next door, under the stairs,
and I here, in the kitchen. Shall I
wake her ?

THE FAIRY (*growing suddenly and unreason-
ably angry, as on her former visit*)

There's no need to do anything of the
sort ! . . . I have nothing to do
with her, her hour has not struck ;
and, when it does, I shall be quite
capable of finding her, without being
shown the way as though I were
blind ! . . . In the meantime, I want
nobody's advice. . . .

TYLTYL (*in dismay*)

But, ma'am, I didn't know . . .

THE FAIRY

That will do. . . . (*Recovering her temper
as suddenly as she lost it.*) By the
way, how old are you ?

TYLTYL

I shall be sixteen a fortnight after
Epiphany.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE FAIRY (*growing angry again*)

A fortnight after Epiphany ! . . . What a way of reckoning ! . . . And here am I without my almanack, having left it with Destiny last time I called on him, fifty years ago ! . . . I don't know where I stand. . . . However, never mind : I'll make the calculation when we see him, for we shall have to get it exactly right. . . . And what have you been doing these seven years since we met ?

TYLTYL

I have been working in the forest with daddy.

THE FAIRY

That means you've been helping him cut down trees I don't like that very much. You call that working, do you ? Ah, well, men evidently can't live without destroying the last things of beauty that remain on the earth ! . . . So let's talk of something else. . . . (*Mysteriously*) Can any one hear us ?

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL

I don't think so.

THE FAIRY (*growing angry once more*)

It doesn't matter what you think, but whether you're sure. What I have to say is tremendously important . . . and strictly private. Come here, quite close, so that I can whisper it. . . . Whom are you in love with ?

TYLTYL (*in amazement*)

Whom am I in love with ?

THE FAIRY (*still cross and quite forgetting the importance of speaking in a low voice*)

Yes, yes ! I'm not talking Greek, am I ? I want to know whether you're in love with any one.

TYLTYL

Yes, certainly ; I love everybody : my parents, my friends, my sister, my neighbours, all the people I know.

THE FAIRY

Now oblige me and don't play the fool. . . . You know perfectly well what I mean. . . . I'm asking whether there's any one girl among

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

those you met whom you love more
than the rest.

TYLTYL (*blushing and considering*)

I don't know. . . .

THE FAIRY (*angrier than ever*)

What do you mean, you don't know?

Who does know, if you don't? At
your age a boy ought to think
of nothing else: if he doesn't, he's
a booby, a nincompoop and not
worth bothering about! . . . There's
nothing to blush at: it's when one's
not in love that one should feel
ashamed. . . . You and I are miles
away just now from the falsehood of
words: we are with the truth of
our thoughts, which is a very
different thing. . . . Come, among
all the girls you've met . . .

TYLTYL (*timidly*)

I don't meet very many. . . .

THE FAIRY

That's no reason; it's not necessary to
meet them by the dozen. Very
often it's enough if you come across

The Betrothal ;

just one : when you've nobody else,
you love that one and are not to be
pitied. . . . But come, among those
close by . . .

TYLTYL

There aren't any close by. . . .

THE FAIRY

There are at the neighbours'. . . .

TYLTYL

There are hardly any neighbours. . . .

THE FAIRY

There are girls in the village, in the town,
way back in the forest and in every
house. You find them everywhere
when your heart's awake. . . .
Which is the prettiest ?

TYLTYL

Well, they're all very pretty.

THE FAIRY

How many do you know ?

TYLTYL

Four in the village, one in the forest and
one by the bridge.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE FAIRY

Oho! That's not bad, for a beginning!

TYLTYL

We don't see many people here, you know.

THE FAIRY

You're not the baby one would think. . . .

But tell me, between ourselves, do they love you too?

TYLTYL

They haven't told me so; they don't know that I love them.

THE FAIRY

But these are things which it isn't necessary to know or to tell! . . . You see that at once when you're living in the truth. . . . A look is enough; there's no mistaking it; and the words which people say merely hide the real ones which the heart has spoken. . . . But I'm in a hurry: would you like me to make them come here?

TYLTYL (*terrified*)

Make them come here? They wouldn't want to! They hardly know me.

The Betrothal ;

They know I'm poor. They don't know where I live, especially those in the village : they never come this way. . . . It's an hour's walk from the church to the house ; the roads are bad ; it's dark . . .

THE FAIRY

Dear, dear, anything more ? Don't let us talk about that. Remember, we've done with untruths. I've only to lift my finger and they'll come. . . .

TYLTYL

But I'm not even sure that they've noticed me at all.

THE FAIRY

Have you looked at them ?

TYLTYL

Yes, sometimes. . . .

THE FAIRY

And have they looked back at you ?

TYLTYL

Yes, sometimes. . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE FAIRY

Well, that's enough; that's the truth; and one doesn't need anything more. You'll find that's the way people tell each other where I'm going to take you, in the world of real things. The rest doesn't matter. . . . They make no mistake. You'll see, once we are there, how well they know all that has to be known; for what we see is nothing: it is what we do not see that makes the world go round. . . . And now, watch me! . . . I'm taking the little green hat out of my bag again! . . . Do you remember it?

TYLTYL

Yes, but it's bigger. . . .

THE FAIRY (*angrily*)

Of course it's bigger! So's your head: they grew up together. . . . Always making those unnecessary remarks! . . .

TYLTYL

And the diamond has changed colour. I should call it blue. . . .

The Betrothal ;

THE FAIRY

But, you see, it isn't the diamond ! This time we're not concerned with the souls of Bread, Sugar, and other simple and unimportant things. We have to choose the great and only love of your life ; for each man has only one. If he misses it, he wanders miserably over the face of the earth. The search goes on until he dies, leaving unfulfilled the great duty which he owes to all those who are within him. But he seldom has an idea of this. He walks along with his eyes shut ; seizes some woman whom he chances to meet in the dark ; and shows her to his friends as proudly as though the gates of Paradise were opening. He fancies himself alone in the world and imagines that in his own heart all things begin and end . . . which is absurd . . . But no more of that ! Is everything ready ? Put on your hat and turn the sapphire ; then they'll come in. . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL (*scared*)

But I'm not dressed! . . . Wait, wait!
. . . What shall I put on? . . .
Oh, what luck! . . . There are my
Sunday clothes on the chair: my
breeches—they're almost new—and
my clean shirt! . . . (*He dresses
hurriedly.*)

THE FAIRY

Come, come, have done! All this doesn't
matter; they won't mind your
clothes. . . . You're not going to
meet a lot of silly children. You
won't find them the same as they
weré in the other life, because this
is the real one; and it's the truth
in them that you'll see here.

TYLTYL (*very uneasy*)

Will they all come together? There are
six of them, at least: I can't re-
member. . . . Suppose they started
quarrelling and pulling one another's
hair?

THE FAIRY

Just the least bit conceited, aren't you?

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL

No, but I'm afraid of their making a noise, because of daddy. . . .

THE FAIRY

Haven't I told you again and again, we're no longer in the world below ! . . . Can't you feel that the air is much purer and the light quite different ? . . . We are now in a sphere in which men and women don't quarrel or wish one another harm. All of that was merely make-believe and doesn't exist deep down. . . . If some of them are unhappy because you hesitate in your choice, they will none the less hope on until the end ; and they know very well that where there is love there must also be sorrow. . . .

TYLTYL

How will they come in ?

THE FAIRY

Upon my word, I don't know. Each of them will do what occurs to her : one will choose the window, another

or, The Blue Bird Chooses
the roof, the wall, the cellar or the
chimney . . . one or two even will
come in by the door ; but those are
the least interesting : they lack
imagination. . . . However, we
shall see when the time comes.
We've talked enough ; time presses ;
come, turn the sapphire. . . .

TYLTYL (*trying to gain time, in order to
conceal his terror*)

Which way round am I to turn it ?

THE FAIRY

The same as with the diamond, from right
to left. . . . (*Looking at TYLTYL*)
Goodness me, how pale you are ! . . .
What has come over you ? Surely
you're not afraid ? . . .

TYLTYL

Not at all, on the contrary. . . . I
always look like this. . . .

THE FAIRY

You needn't be ashamed to admit it :
this is a very serious moment ; and,
if men knew what happened, in this
life and all the others, when they

The B  trothal ;

made a bad choice, they'd never dare to get married at all. . . . But what you're trying to do is to put off the dreadful moment ; and I'm a goose to be listening to you. . . . Come, turn the sapphire !

(TYLTYL *turns the sapphire.* No sooner has he done so than the cottage is filled with a supernatural light, which invests all things with beauty, purity and a transcendent joy. A window opens noiselessly and a YOUNG GIRL, 'dressed like a wood-cutter and carrying a hatchet in her hand, steps into the room and runs up and kisses TYLTYL.)

THE GIRL

Good evening, Tytyl ! . . You called me : here I am ! . . .

TYLTYL

Hallo, it's Milette ! . . . (To THE FAIRY)
This is Milette, my cousin, the

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

daughter of Feltree, the wood-cutter. . . . We see each other sometimes in the forest. . . . (To MILETTE) So you loved me ? . . . You never said so ! . . .

MILETTE

Do people say such things in a life where everything is forbidden ? Need they say them ? . . . But I knew at once and from the first that you loved me ; and so did I love you. . . . It was one evening when you went past with your father. You were carrying a bundle of laurel-twigs. You didn't know my name then and said, " Good evening," and looked into my eyes. I answered, " Good night," and cast my eyes down ; but I had that look of yours in my heart ; and since then, without leaving home, I've been here very often ; but you didn't seem to know. . . .

TYLTYL

No, no, it's I who every evening after sunset used to go to you. I was never

The Betrothal ;

at home. Mummy would ask, "What are you thinking of, Tylyl?" And daddy answered, "He's up in the moon again!" I wasn't in the moon at all, I was with you; but you paid no attention: you were seeing to the fire, or the soup, or the rabbits; you were cutting chips or tying up bundles, as if no one had entered your cottage. . . .

MILETTE

No, I was here and kissing you all the time, but you didn't kiss me. . . .

TYLTYL

I tell you it was I who was always kissing you; I tell you it was you who were never there. . . .

MILETTE

It's funny that we can never see things till we've learnt how to look for them. . . . But, now that we do know, now that we see, we can really kiss each other. . . .

TYLTYL (*eagerly kissing MILETTE*)

Yes, yes, let's kiss each other again and

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

again till we have no kisses left ! . . .
Oh, how wonderful it is ! . . . I
never kissed anybody till now ; and
I'd no idea what it was like ! . . .
Oh, how wonderful, how wonder-
ful ! . . . I could kiss you for ever !
I could spend my life kissing you ! . . .

MILETTE

And I, I too ! . . . I'd never kissed any-
body either ; I mean, I'd only kissed
daddy and mummy ; it's not the
same thing at all. . . . But tell me,
Tytyl, is it true that you love me and
only me ? . . . Who is that coming
in ?

*(Opening the wall, which closes
again behind her, enter a
SECOND YOUNG GIRL,
dressed in a blood-red skirt
and bodice. A butcher's knife
hangs from her belt.)*

THE SECOND GIRL *(rushing up to TYLTYL
and kissing him)*

Here I am, Tytyl darling, here I am !

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL (*to* THE FAIRY)

This is Belline, my cousin, the butcher's daughter. . . . (*To* BELLINE) What's the matter with you, Belline dear ? You're wet through and quite out of breath ! . . .

BELLINE

I should think I was ! . . . It's a long way from the village to your place ! . . . I didn't even wait to wash my hands. . . . I was helping daddy to cut up a calf ; the moment your thoughts came, I dropped my knife and left everything so as to get here quicker. . . . I even believe that, while I was there, I cut my finger rather badly ; but here it doesn't show. . . . Daddy hasn't the least idea what has happened ; he must be furious. (*Catching sight of* MILETTE) How do you do, Milette ?

MILETTE

How do you do, Belline ? . . . Do you love him too ?

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BELLINE

Why, yes, of course! . . . You're not angry with me?

MILETTE

Not at all, I'm glad. . . . We'll both of us love him. . . .

BELLINE

How pretty you look this evening, Milette dearest. . . .

MILETTE

No, it's you, Belline: you've never been more beautiful. . . .

TYLTYL (*to THE FAIRY*)

They're taking it very well. . . .

THE FAIRY

Of course they are; they know it's not your fault. . . .

(At this point, the chimney-recess lights up, opens at the back and admits a THIRD YOUNG GIRL, dressed like the maid at an inn and carrying a pewter tray under one arm and a bottle under the other.)

The Betrothal ;

THE THIRD GIRL (*enthusiastically, darting at TYLTYL*)

Here I am, here I am ! It's me ! . . .
Good evening, everybody ; but first
a kiss for Tylytyl ! . . .

TYLTYL

Hallo, you too, Roselle ? . . . (*To THE FAIRY*) This is Roselle, the daughter of the landlord of the Golden Sun. . . . (*To ROSELLE*) Was there no one at the inn this evening, that you were able to come ?

ROSELLE

On the contrary, heaps of people ! . . .
You can imagine, on Christmas Eve ! . . . There were men sitting and drinking on the counter and on all the window-sills. I dropped a tray with twelve glasses on it when you called me. Why, I've still got the tray under this arm and a bottle of the best brandy under the other. It gets in my way when I'm kissing you. . . . They're still shouting after me, down there, as though I

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had set the house on fire. . . . They must be wondering if I'm mad. But I don't care, I was so delighted that you were thinking of me. A sudden happiness came over me. . . . How are you, Tytyl dear? . . . Kiss me again! . . . You're even handsomer than when I saw you last. . . .

TYLTYL (*kissing her*)

And you, dear Roselle, you are prettier than ever, and your cheeks are so soft and cool. . . . I never dared kiss you before. . . . When any one else did, I always said to myself, "How happy he must be!"

ROSELLE

The others didn't matter. . . . But I knew well enough that you didn't dare. . . . I didn't dare either, though I was dying to kiss you. . . . Do you remember the first time you came to the inn, six weeks ago? It was on a Sunday morning, after High Mass; you didn't look at

The Betrothal ;

anybody ; but suddenly, when I came near, your eyes grew so bright and opened so wide. . . .

TYLTYL

And so did yours open wide : they looked like two lakes.

ROSELLE

What were they doing, our eyes ? What happened ? . . . I know that, since that day, I think of nothing but you. I do no work, I'm always here ; but you came very seldom. . . .

(Coming down the ladder from the attic, enter a FOURTH YOUNG GIRL, in rustic clothes, all white with flour.)

TYLTYL *(turning round)*

Who's there ? You, Aimette ? . . . *(To THE FAIRY)* This is Aimette, another cousin, the miller's daughter. . . .

THE FAIRY

Go on, go on, you're doing very nicely !

AIMETTE *(a little shyly)*

I came as I was, from the mill. I've not had time to brush myself.

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TYLTYL

That doesn't matter. Kiss me all the same. How fresh and rosy you are, underneath all that flour! . . .

AIMETTE

I shall never dare. . . . You'd be covered with it. . . .

(She has hardly finished speaking when, through the other window, enter a FIFTH YOUNG GIRL, barefoot, bare-headed, clad in rags and carrying in her hand a wooden bowl with a few halfpence clinking in it. She does not dare come forward.)

TYLTYL

One more! . . . *(To THE FAIRY)* This is Jalline, the little beggar-girl from the bridge by the Hermitage.

THE FAIRY

Excellent, excellent! . . . I'd better wake your father and tell him the

The Betrothal ;

house won't be big enough ; then he can start building at once. . . .

TYLTYL

But it's not my fault. I didn't do it on purpose. One can't help loving them ! . . . How are you, Jalline ? . . . What have you done with your poor old father ?

JALLINE

I left him at the bridge.

TYLTYL

What, all alone in the dark, and he blind and a cripple ! Isn't that very dangerous ? . . .

JALLINE (*on the verge of tears*)

Yes, I know it's wrong. It was very wrong of me, very. I won't do it again. But I couldn't help it, Tylyl, really. When you called me, I couldn't stay where I was.

TYLTYL (*kissing her*)

There, there, don't cry. I'll help you to bring him home. . . . Do you remember, I did that once before, one

or, The Blue Bird Chooses
evening when I was crossing the
bridge and gave you a halfpenny it
was all I had !

JALLINE

I've kept it ever since, Tytyl. I put it
in a box. I shall never lose it.

TYLTYL (*kissing her again*)

Oh, the sweet smell of lavender and
thyme ! . . .

(This time the door opens slowly.

Enter a SIXTH YOUNG GIRL.

*She is in evening-dress, with
a fur cloak over her shoulders,
and carries a fan in her
hand.)*

TYLTYL

Who is this ?

THE FAIRY

But where do they all come from ? At
your age, too ! I should never have
believed it ! . . .

TYLTYL

But I didn't know. . . . (*To THE FAIRY*)
Why, it's Rosarelle ! . . . The
mayor's daughter ! . . . You know,

The Betrothal ;

from the great big farmhouse, with the three round turrets, at the other end of the village ! . . . What shall I do ? She's so proud ! . . .

THE FAIRY

Not a bit ; she won't be any prouder than the others. Speak to her and you'll see. . . .

TYLTYL

I'll never dare. . . . What could I say ? . . .

ROSARELLE (*coming forward*)

Well, Tyltyl, don't you know me ?

TYLTYL

Yes, miss, but I wasn't sure. . . .

ROSARELLE

Miss ? What do you mean ? That's not my name. My name's Rosarelle ; and you know it. . . . There was a big dinner at my father's, for Christmas. Your thoughts came to fetch me while we were at dessert. I jumped up at once and upset a glass of champagne. They were alarmed and thought I was ill and began

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to fuss : it was as much as I could do to get away. Still, here I am and I'm going to kiss you. . . . Do you remember how we used to look at each other when you came to the yard with your bundles of wood ? . . .

TYLTYL

Oh yes ! You were so lovely, I couldn't take my eyes off you. . . . But you are lovelier than ever to-day.

ROSARELLE

That was the beginning ; but I didn't quite realize it till the day you gave me the three little bullfinches which you found in the forest.

TYLTYL

Yes, yes, I remember. . . . I knew too. . . . Are they still alive ?

ROSARELLE

Two of the little things are dead ; but the third is splendid. . . . I keep him in a gilt cage, by the window ; and each time he sings . . .

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THE FAIRY

Come, come; these little confidences are most interesting, but we've no time to lose. Everything must be settled to-night, for an opportunity like this comes only once to a man; and woe to him who lets it slip: he will never have another chance! But what we have to do now is to put our heads together and prepare for the great choice, which is to decide the happiness of two human beings first and of many others after that.

TYLTYL (*greatly perturbed*)

Must I make my choice at once and can I only choose one? . . .

THE FAIRY

Don't distress yourself; it's not your affair; it's not you who'll choose. . . .

TYLTYL (*utterly bewildered*)

Not I who'll choose? . . .

THE FAIRY

Why, no, it doesn't concern you.

TYLTYL (*completely stupefied*)

It doesn't concern me? . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses .

THE FAIRY

No, no, I told you so . of course it doesn't.

TYLTYL (*failing to understand a word*)

Then I can't love whom I want to ?

THE FAIRY

Why, no. . . . Nobody loves whom he wants to or does what he wants to in this world. You must first of all learn what is wanted by those on whom you depend.

TYLTYL

By those on whom I depend ? . . .

THE FAIRY

Why, yes : your ancestors, to begin with.

TYLTYL

My ancestors ?

THE FAIRY

All those who have died before you.

TYLTYL

What business is it of theirs, since they're dead ? I don't know them.

THE FAIRY

I dare say not, but they know you. . . .
And then there are all your children.

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL

My children ? What children ? I've never had any !

THE FAIRY

Yes, yes, yes, you've had thousands who aren't born yet and who're waiting for the mother whom you're going to give them.

TYLTYL

Then it's they who will choose my bride ?

THE FAIRY

Why, of course ; that's how things always happen. . . . But let's have no more talk : we have to make a few preparations for the great journey ; it's going to be rather long and tiring. . . . And first we must get some money : I've none left at home ; and my magic wand that brings it me is being repaired a few thousand miles down in the centre of the earth. . . . I don't quite see where we're to get what we want : the expenses will be quite heavy. . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

(*To the GIRLS*) Has any one of you
a few thousand francs on her ?

JALLINE

I've only sixpence halfpenny in my bowl,
besides Tytyl's halfpenny, which I
can't part with.

ROSELLE

I've seven francs fifty, to-night's takings.

MILETTE

I've nothing at all.

ROSARELLE

I've nothing on me, but grandfather's
very rich.

THE FAIRY

That's all right, it's all we need : he can
lend us some money.

ROSARELLE

Yes, but he's a miser !

THE FAIRY

No, that's a mistake ; there are no misers.
Thanks to the sapphire which reveals
the heart and essence of things,
you will see that he is no more of a
miser than you or I and that he will

The Betrothal ;

give us whatever we ask. That's the first visit we shall have to pay. . . . Well, are you all ready ? Which way shall we go out ?

(At this point a trap-door opens in the middle of the stage ; and from it there rises slowly, like a tower, a gigantic SHAPE, twice a-man's height. It is square, enormous, imposing and overwhelming ; it gives the impression of a mass of granite and of immense, blind, inflexible force. Its face is not seen. It is draped in grey folds that are rigid as rock.)

THE SHAPE

It's I. You have forgotten me, as usual ! . . .

TYLTYL *(not a little frightened)*

Who is this gentleman ?

THE FAIRY .

He's right, I had forgotten him. It's nobody, it's Destiny. I didn't fore-

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

see that the sapphire would make him visible also. He will have to come with us, we can't prevent him; he's entitled to. Give him your hand.

TYLTYL

Will he lead us ?

THE FAIRY

That remains to be seen. We must hear what Light says : it's a matter for her.

TYLTYL

Why, of course, Light ! . . . Where is she ? . . . Isn't she going with us ?

THE FAIRY

Yes, yes, but she has a great deal to do at the moment. . . . She wasn't free this evening. . . . We shall find her at my place, where we shall go straight from your visit to the miser.

TYLTYL

How glad I shall be to see her again ! . . . She was so nice, so sweet, so beautiful, so affectionate and kind ! . . .

The Betrothal ;

THE FAIRY

Come, give Destiny your hand ; it's time to start.

(TYLTYL stretches out his arm to the monster, who grips the boy's little hand and wrist in his huge bronze-coloured hand.)

TYLTYL

Here you are, sir. . . . (*Giving a cry*)
Hi ! . . . It's not a hand, it's a steel vice ! . . .

THE FAIRY

It's nothing ; you'll get used to it. . . .
Come, is everything ready at last ?
. . . Nothing more that we've forgotten ? . . . One, two, three and off we go. . . .

(*A knock at the door*)

THE FAIRY (*crossly*)

Who's come to disturb us now ? Shall we never get out of this hovel ?

(*Another knock*)

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL

Come in ! . . .

(*A third knock*)

TYLTYL

Who's there ? . . . Come in, can't
you ? . . .

(*The door opens slowly and reveals
a FEMALE FORM shrouded in
long white veils, like an
antique statue. The face,
hands, mouth, eyes, hair and
eyebrows are lifeless and
white as marble. It stands
motionless on the threshold.*)

TYLTYL

What is it ?

THE FAIRY

Really, I don't know. . . . It must be
one of those whom you've for-
gotten. . . .

TYLTYL (*vainly ransacking his memory*)

I ? . . . I've forgotten nobody. . . . I've
never seen her before. . . . I can't
remember. . . . (*Going up to THE*

The Betrothal ;

VEILED FORM) Who are you, please ?
(THE VEILED FORM *does not reply.*)

THE FAIRY.

It's no use asking her. She can't tell you.
She can't come to life till you remember her.

TYLTYL

But I don't. I'm thinking and trying as hard as I can, but I can find nothing.

THE FAIRY

Very well, very well, we shall see later, when everything is cleared up. . . .
As she blocks the path, we must go out by the window. . . . Come, this way ! We have taken our fate in our hands ; and things have begun ! . . .

DESTINY

Excuse me, excuse me ! It's I who am Fate and it's I who begin and it's I who give orders. . . . I go first, for it is I who direct everything and I am the only master ! . . .

(The 'windows open down to the ground and all go out into the

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

*starry night, preceded by
DESTINY dragging TYLTYL
by the hand. THE VEILED
FORM follows them slowly,
at a distance.)*

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I.—*Outside the Door*

The curtain represents a huge double door surmounted with a flattened arch. The door is old, thick and massive, unyielding, bound and studded with iron bars and nails. In the middle of the door is a formidable lock.

(Enter THE FAIRY and TYLTYL carrying an empty wallet over his shoulder)

THE FAIRY

This is the Miser's door.

TYLTYL

Where are my sweethearts ?

THE FAIRY

At home, in my palace ; they'll wait there
for you and will be quite safe. . . .
Be quick and come back soon.

The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL

What about Destiny? I thought he would never leave me again?

THE FAIRY

That's true; it's curious. But it's not our business to run after him; it's his own affair; he's by no means indispensable.

TYLTYL

Are you coming with me to the Miser?

THE FAIRY

No; it's better that you should see him alone. You're not frightened, are you?

TYLTYL

Not a bit; but I don't quite know what I am to do.

THE FAIRY

It's very simple: when you're in there, you turn the sapphire; and he'll give you anything you want.

TYLTYL

He won't attack me? I've no weapons, you know.

The Betrothal ;

THE FAIRY

On the contrary, he will be delighted to be of service.

TYLTYL

How shall I get in ? There's no bell and no knocker. Am I to tap at the door ?

THE FAIRY

Do nothing of the sort ! That would be giving him a hint ; and he would become unmanageable. . . . But this also is quite simple. I will touch the big lock with my wand ; the doors will slide back to right and left ; and you will suddenly be on the other side, that is to say, right inside the cave, before he even suspects it. Once there, you can keep quiet in your corner for a moment and watch him playing with his gold, if that amuses you ; and it will amuse you, for it's rather curious. Then, when you've had enough, turn the sapphire. Get over there, on the left, against the wall

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

of the arch, so that you can slip into his den at once, without making a noise. . . . Look out! The door will disappear! And I'll take myself off this way! . . . (*She touches the great lock with her wand.*)

SCENE 2.—*The Miser's Cave*

The heavy doors open in the middle, slide right and left and disappear in the slips, revealing the whole of THE MISER'S den, an immense cave with low arches in which are piled large sacks bursting with gold, silver and copper coins. The only light comes from a wretched smoking candle. TYLTYL hides himself as well as he can in a dark corner. THE MISER, an old, hook-nosed man, with a dirty white beard and long, scanty hair, is dressed in a sort of squalid, patched dressing-gown. On the floor is an old carpet, with three sacks bulging with gold at one corner.

The Betrothal ;

THE MISER

To-day I shall count the contents of these three sacks all over again. I must have made a mistake in my last reckoning. There are three louis missing. Three louis are sixty francs, which make a considerable difference in a total of six hundred thousand francs. It's quite impossible to sleep with that anxiety on one's mind. Each of these three sacks ought to hold two hundred thousand francs, the first and second in louis of twenty francs and the third in ten-franc pieces. I will empty them on the carpet first to see what a lovely heap they make. . . . (*He empties the contents of the first sack on the carpet.*) How they sparkle, how they sparkle! . . . What a lot of them there are! . . . When you see the gold spreading itself out, it's impossible to believe that it could all go into one sack! . . . Let's have another. . . . This is the sack with the little ten-franc pieces. . . . (*He*

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

empties a second sack.) They are as lovely as the big ones. . . . They are younger, that's all, and there are more of them. . . . Now let's see what the third holds. . . . (*He empties the third sack. A few gold coins roll off the carpet. He throws himself flat on the floor to catch them.*) Oh no, oh no, children! . . . This won't do! . . . You mustn't run away like that! . . . Nothing is allowed to leave this cave! . . . Trying to hide yourselves, are you? To go where, pray? Don't you know that there's no place like home? . . . Fancy running away like that from daddy! I should never have thought it of you! . . . This way, children, this way, darlings. This way, my pretty ones! Back to the heap, back to the cradle, then you'll be happy! . . . (*He picks up a coin which has rolled farther than the rest.*) Don't do it again, you; you're always making off; you're a little torment and you set a bad

The Betrothal ;

example. Beg my pardon, or I'll punish you. You shall be the first to be spent ; I'll give you to a beggar, do you hear ? . . . (*Kissing it.*) No, no, I'm only pretending. . . . There, there, don't cry ! : . . I was merely frightening you ! . . . I love you all the same, but don't do it again ! . . . Here, here, here, they're here, in front of me and all around me. . . . It will take me quite a fortnight to count them all and to weigh them in my scales. . . . What a lot of them, what a lot of them ! And how pretty they are ! . . . I know them every one, I could call them by their names. . . . They would need a hundred and twenty thousand different names ; and each of those names stands for a treasure ! . . . (*He rolls on the carpet amidst the gold.*) I love to see them close ! . . . Oh, what a cosy bed ! And what a joy it is to be among one's daughters ! . . . For they are my daughters : I brought them into the world ; I

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

have nurtured them, protected them from harm, fondled and pampered them. I know their history, the trouble they've given me; but all is forgotten: they love me, I love them and we shall never part again! . . . Oh, what a fine thing happiness is! . . . (*He fills his two hands with the gold, makes it trickle over his heart, on his forehead and in his beard and utters little sighs of pleasure which gradually swell into roars of delight. Suddenly he shudders, starts and springs up, thinking that he has heard a sound.*) What is it? . . . Who's there? . . . (*Reassuring himself.*) No, no, it's nothing . . . no one would dare. . . . (*He sees TYLTYL and gives a shout.*) A thief! . . . A thief! . . . A thief! . . . You here! . . . You here! . . . (*With his hands clutching like claws, terrified and terrifying, he rushes upon TYLTYL, who jumps back and quickly turns the sapphire. THE MISER stops short. After an inward struggle, which*

The Betrothal ;

seems violent and lasts for some seconds, his hands drop to his sides, his face lights up and loses its hardness. He seems to wake from a bad dream and tries to wipe the memory of it from his forehead. He gazes with astonishment at the gold spread over the carpet, feels and pushes it with his foot, seems not to know what it is and then addresses TYLTYL in a very calm and gentle voice.)

THE MISER

You must have awakened me. . . . How did you get here ? . . . What have you come for ? . . .

TYLTYL

I've come to ask you to lend me a little money. . . . I understand that I need some in order to discover my bride. . . .

THE MISER

Have you anything to put it in ?

TYLTYL

I've brought this wallet.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE MISER

I shall be delighted to fill it for you ; but
I warn you that gold is very heavy
and that you won't be able to carry
it away.

TYLTYL

You must put in just what you think fit.

THE MISER (*pouring the gold by handfuls
into the wallet*)

Help me, will you ? . . . We'll fill it to
the brim and see how that does. . . .
We can easily lighten it afterwards, if
it's too heavy. . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, you're giving me too much ; I don't
want all that ! . . . So you're not
a miser, as they told me ?

THE MISER

I ? Not at all. Why should I be ? . . .
I have only a few weeks to live and
am not in need of anything. . . . I
hardly eat at all ; and I drink nothing
but water.

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL

Why were you lying on your gold when I came in, kissing it and calling it by pet names ? You seemed to worship it.

THE MISER

Oh, I don't know ! It amuses me. When a man grows old, he has to amuse himself as best he can. . . . But it isn't I who do it. All that is only a sort of dream. I am thinking of something very different. . . . All men are like that at my age. They are not often where you see them ; they are not often doing what they appear to do ; and every one lives in one of those dreams which have nothing to do with the truth. . . . But this is not the moment to explain things to you. . . . There, your wallet is full. Can you manage it ?

TYLTYL (*making an effort*)

No, really, it is a bit too heavy. . . .
Let's take some of it out. . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE MISER (*emptying part of the wallet*)
I dare say that's better.

TYLTYL

Oh, look here, you're taking it all! . . .
There won't be enough left. . . . I
must put a little of it back. . . .

THE MISER

I say, are you becoming a miser now?

TYLTYL

No, but I don't know that I shall have a
chance of coming back again. . . .
Just help me lift the wallet on my
shoulder. . . .

THE MISER (*helping him with the wallet*)
There you are.

TYLTYL (*staggering under the load*)
I say, what a weight gold is!

THE MISER

Don't I know it? . . . Have you far to
go?

TYLTYL

I really can't tell.

THE MISER

What's the weather like outside?

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL

It was bright sunshine.

THE MISER

One wouldn't think it in here. . . .

Fancy, it's years since I've looked at the sky or the green trees ! . . .

But you can't breathe under the weight of your bag, you poor little man ! . . . Come, kiss me good-bye : there's no knowing when we shall meet again. . . . Thanks for the pleasant time you have given me and especially for waking me up. . . . I shall make the most of my remaining days. . . .

TYLTYL

Which is the way out ?

THE MISER

That way, I suppose.

(TYLTYL steps forward through the arch. The doors at once slide and close behind him and he is left standing alone, in the dark, in front of the great shut door.)

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL

It's dark. . . . I'm all alone. . . . Where
am I ? . . . Where am I to go ?

DESTINY (*looming up out of the shadow*)
This way !

TYLTYL

Hullo ! You're there, are you ? I
thought you had deserted me. . . .

DESTINY (*grasping his hand*)
I was here all the time. . . . I never lose
sight of you. . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, but, I say, don't walk so fast ! . . .
My bag's frightfully heavy. . . . It
would be much kinder of you if you
helped me to carry it a little, instead
of making me rush along like this. . . .

DESTINY

I am not man's servant. . . . Forward,
forward, forward ! . . .

(*They go out.*)

The Betrothal ;

SCENE 3.—*A Closet in the Fairy's Palace*

A sort of waiting-room or lumber-room containing the principal accessories of the Tales of Mother Goose, such as Cinderella's pumpkin and glass slipper ; Little Red Ridinghood's cake and bowl ; Hop-o'-my-Thumb's pebbles ; the Ogre's daughters' golden crowns ; the Sleeping Beauty's distaff and snake-tub ; the Giant's seven-leagued boots ; Blue Beard's key ; the Blue Bird in his silver cage ; and, hanging from the wall, Catskin's weather-coloured, moon-coloured and sun-coloured dresses. All these things look rather tawdry in the grey and unbecoming light. TYLTYL's seven little friends are locked up in this room. In the same unsympathetic light they look much less pretty than when they entered the cottage and they seem rather tired, discontented and glum, except THE VEILED GIRL, who stands on one side, motionless, impassive and unrevealing.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

BELLINE

Where have they brought us ?

ROSARELLE

I don't know ; but I must say that it's not a proper place in which to keep young ladies waiting.

BELLINE

Yes, it looks like a lumber-room where they've stored all the odds and ends and litter of the house.

ROSARELLE (*touching the various objects in disgust*)

What's this ? A distaff ? Bless me, what for ? . . . A pumpkin, a cake, an old bowl and goodness knows what else ! . . . A tub full of dead eels ! Gracious, how they smell ! . . . It's a disgracefully kept place. . . . And that lot of old fly-blown, spun-glass dresses ! . . . My dear, how horrible ! . . . What sort of place can this be ? A potting-shed, a rag-and-bone shop, a pawn-broker's, or a thieves' kitchen ? Whom can it belong to ? A receiver of stolen

The Betrothal ;

goods ? (*Touching the more bizarre dresses*) Or a Hottentot dress-maker ?

BELLINE

There's something of everything . . . except a broom and a duster.

ROSARELLE

One wouldn't be enough.

BELLINE

And nothing to sit on but an old wooden bench. . . .

ROSARELLE

But it's carved, my love ! . . .

BELLINE

Yes, carved in dust.

ROSARELLE

Reach me one of those hideous rags and let me wipe it. . . .

BELLINE (*eagerly and obsequiously*)

Wait, miss, I'll do that. . . . (*She takes the moon-coloured dress and dusts the seat with it.*) There, that's a little better ; that's at least one corner nearly clean enough to sit on.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

ROSARELLE (*sitting down*)

I'm tired out !

BELLINE (*sitting down beside her*)

So am I ; my feet are dreadfully sore.

ROSARELLE (*looking around through her lorgnette*)

But what I want to know is where have we got to ? My dear, have we fallen into a trap ?

BELLINE

The company certainly is a little mixed. There's the miller's daughter, the girl from the inn, the wood-cutter . . .

ROSARELLE

Or rather, to be accurate, the wood-stealer. . . . There's even the little beggar-girl from the bridge by the Hermitage, to whom I refused a penny last Sunday. . . . My dear, you should have heard the insolent way in which she asked for it ! . . .

BELLINE

And what's that white image standing in the corner, the one that never stirs,

The Betrothal ;

never speaks and follows us wherever we go ?

ROSARELLE

That great lump of clay, that ugly wax-work ? That washed-out plaster saint ?

BELLINE

She looks very ill.

ROSARELLE

She may have Jewish leprosy or Zanzibar plague or Bombay cholera. . . . I tell you, we must be careful : that's all very catching. . . .

AIMETTE (*coming up to the bench timidly*)

I should like to sit down too. I'm very-tired. . . .

ROSARELLE

Mind what you're about, miss ! . . .
There's dust enough as it is ; I don't want flour into the bargain.

ROSELLE

What's all this, what's all this ? Are we turning up our noses at flour now ?

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

ROSARELLE

I wasn't addressing my remarks to you, madam.

ROSELLE

No, but I'm speaking to you. What bread would you eat if you had no flour ?

ROSARELLE

You would do better to tell your father to pay the three quarters' rent that's in arrear.

ROSELLE

He'll pay his rent when your horrid old miser of a grandfather has seen to those repairs. We've been asking to have them done these last three years.

BELLINE

Is it the repairs that prevent your father from paying his butcher's bills ?

ROSELLE

Does he owe anything at your shop ?

BELLINE

It's six months since we saw the colour of his money.

The Betrothal ;

ROSELLE

He's waiting to see the colour of yours
at the inn.

BELLINE

Of mine indeed ? You can wait a long
time before I set foot in your dirty
dram-shop.

ROSELLE

Yes, but that father of yours isn't so
squeamish when he comes on Sundays
and tipples till we're obliged to put
him out dead-drunk.

ROSARELLE (*to BELLINE*)

Don't answer her, my dear ; we are
not accustomed to these pot-house
brawls.

ROSELLE

As for you, miss, who pretend to be so
particular, you just go and ask your
father, the mayor, who it was that
nibbled the holes, which were not
made by rats, in the town's cash-box.

ROSARELLE (*springing to her feet, furiously*)
Holes not made by rats ! What do
you mean ?

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

ROSELLE

I mean what every one in the village means ! . . .

ROSARELLE

Mind what you're saying ; and say it again if you dare.

ROSELLE

Well, what would you do if I did say it again ? You don't frighten me with your airs and graces.

ROSARELLE

Never mind my airs and graces ; I'll soon show you what I'll do.

ROSELLE

Well, then, I do say it again.

ROSARELLE (*boxing her ears*)

And take that for your answer ! . . .

(*Piercing screams and a general turmoil.* ROSELLE and

AIMETTE make a rush at BELLINE and ROSARELLE, while MILETTE and JALLINE vainly try to separate the combatants. THE VEILED

The Betrothal ;

GIRL *alone remains motionless in her corner, as though she were not present. The others claw one another's faces, tear one another's hair and end by uttering such shrill yells and shrieks that TYL-TYL, returning from THE MISER's, hears them from the far end of the palace and comes running up, scared and dismayed. He is bare-headed and only half-dressed, and does not understand what is going on.)*

TYLTYL

What is it ? What's the matter ? What has happened ? An accident ? Are you hurt ? What have you been doing ?

THE GIRLS (*all speaking together*)

It's she ! . . . No, no ; it was Rosarelle who began ! . . . I tell you, it was she ! . . . She insulted me ! . . . She boxed my ears ! . . . She dared .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

to talk against my father! . . . She spoke ill of my mother! . . . She's lying, she's lying! . . . She nearly tore my ear off! . . . She's driven a hairpin into my cheek! . . .

(Enter THE FAIRY)

THE FAIRY

Why, what's the matter?

TYLTYL (*in bewilderment*)

I don't know, ma'am. I think they must have gone mad. They were so sweet when I left them. I should never have known them! . . . Look, look, they are quite different! . . . Rosarelle and Belline's eyes are blazing like furies', Aimette looks so spiteful and Roselle so brazen, Jalline hasn't washed herself and Milette's cheeks are as red as a turkey-cock's. . . . (*Bursting into tears and hiding his eyes with his arm, like a child crying*) I can't bear it! Oh, I can't bear it!

THE FAIRY

But, you little silly, it's your own fault!

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL

My fault ?

THE FAIRY

Yes, of course, it's your fault. . . . And, first, where have you come from ? What have you done with your jacket and your green hat ?

TYLTYL

Why, ma'am, I was busy dressing ; I was putting on the little pair of silk breeches and the jacket embroidered with pearls which you told me I was to wear when I went to see the Ancestors. . . . Then I heard screams, dropped everything, ran up and found them fighting, tearing out one another's hair and scratching one another's faces. . . .

THE FAIRY

A pretty business ! . . . That will teach you to run after them without your talisman, which reveals the truth. . . . I call it most incorrect and improper. . . . Don't you see that you

or, The Blue Bird Chooses
are not seeing them now as they
are ? . . .

TYLTYL

I'm not seeing them as they are ? . . .
Then how do I see them ? . . .

THE FAIRY

Why, as they are not, that is to say, as
you ought never to see them. . . .
It's all so wonderfully simple : any-
thing that's ugly isn't true, never
has been true, and never will be.

TYLTYL

That's easily said ; but you see what you
do see.

THE FAIRY

When you see what you do see, you see
nothing at all. . . . I've told you
before, it's what you do not see
that makes the world go round. . . .
All this does not count ; it's only a
little foam on the surface of the
ocean. . . . But run quickly and
fetch the sapphire and we shall once
more see deep down into their souls,

The Betrothal ;

the truth of their hearts and the well-spring of their life. . . . Wait, you needn't trouble : I see Light coming ; she has brought you your hat.

(*Enter LIGHT*)

LIGHT

Good evening, Tytyl.

TYLTYL (*throwing himself passionately into her arms*)

Oh, Light, Light ! . . . It's my dear, dear Light ! . . . Where were you ? . . . What have you been doing ever since I saw you last ? . . . I have missed you so much and looked for you so often ! . . .

LIGHT

My dear little Tytyl ! . . . I have never lost sight of you. . . . I have guided you and counselled you and kissed you very often, without your knowing it. . . . But we will talk about all this later ; to-day we have no time. I have only one night to give you

or, The Blue Bird Chooses
and there is a great deal to be done.
(*Enter DESTINY.*)

DESTINY

Where is Tytyl ?

TYLTYL

Here. I'm not trying to hide.

DESTINY

And quite right, too, for it would
be no use ; there's no escaping
me. . . .

TYLTYL (*contemplating him in astonish-
ment*) .

But what's the matter with you ? . . .
What has happened to you ? . . .
You look so much smaller ! . . . You
seem to be less tall and less broad.
. . . You're not ill, are you ? . . .

DESTINY (*who has indeed shrunk
appreciably*)

I ? I never change ; I am always the
same. I am insuperable, insensible,
invulnerable, immutable, inexorable,

The Betrothal ;

irresistible, invisible, inflexible and irrevocable ! . . .

TYLTYL

All right, all right; what I said was merely . . .

THE FAIRY (*aside, to TYLTYL*)

Be quiet; you will only vex him and he will get out of hand. . . . It is probably being close to Light that has upset him; they never did agree. . . . (*Aloud*) Come, children, it's time. . . . Put on your hat, Tylyl, and turn the sapphire; we shall see what happens. Sometimes it works upon people's hearts, sometimes on their minds, sometimes on the objects around them and often on all three: one cannot tell beforehand. . . .

(He turns the sapphire. The closet brightens with a blue and supernatural light which gives beauty and life to everything in the room; the accessories of Mother Goose

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

seem to wake up : the spindle revolves madly and unreels threads of gold and crystal ; the pumpkin swells, sways from side to side and lights up ; the Blue Bird bursts into song ; the snake-tub bubbles and pours forth fruits and flowers ; the moon-coloured and sun-coloured dresses wave and glitter ; the columns and aisles gleam with precious stones. But the group of GIRLS especially undergoes a radical and wonderful transformation : their features relax, their eyes open wider, smiles blossom on their lips, their frocks become gay and splendid, innocence, gladness, kindness and beauty bloom once more ; and TYLTYL, in an ecstasy, clapping his hands, intoxicated with delight, rushes into the midst of them,

The Betrothal ;

*giving and receiving kisses
and not knowing which of
them to listen to.)*

TYLTYL

They're themselves again, they're themselves again ! . . . How lovely they are, how lovely they are ! . . . Jalline, Milette my darling, Aimette, Belline darling, Rosarelle, Roselle ! . . . They are all as they were before, and I love every one of them ! . . . Let us kiss again, again, again ! . . . Oh, let us kiss for ever ! . . .

(At this moment, THE VEILED GIRL, who has played no part in the transfiguration or in the general ecstasy, staggers in her corner and, without uttering a sound, falls suddenly and unresistingly, like a statue, and lies motionless, stretched on the floor. Silence, terror and consternation, followed by cries and bustle ; the GIRLS

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

*rush to her assistance and
gather eagerly round her.)*

ROSELLE (*lifting her up*)

Help me, somebody !

ROSARELLE

She isn't hurt, is she ?

ROSELLE (*examining her anxiously*)

No, no, I can't see anything.

AIMETTE (*stroking her forehead*)

She's breathing, she's sighing.

ROSARELLE (*kissing her*)

She has only fainted. . . . Tell us what
you feel. . . . You're not in pain,
dear, are you ?

MILETTE

She doesn't answer.

JALLINE (*taking one of her hands and
stroking it*)

Perhaps she's hungry.

MILETTE (*stroking the other hand*)

No, can't you feel ? She's cold.

The Betrothal ;

JALLINE

Will you have my cloak ?

ROSELLE

No, no, it's not that. . . . What she wants is a drop of brandy. . . . I haven't my bottle. . . . And don't all crowd round her, she's suffocating. She wants air ! . . .

ROSARELLE (*supporting her head*)

Have you some water there ? . . . We ought to send for a doctor. . . .

BELLINE

She's as white as marble. . . . She might be dead. . . .

ROSARELLE

No, no, she's coming to. . . . I can hear her heart beating. . . .

THE FAIRY (*intervening*)

Come, come, it's nothing. . . . I have practised medicine longer than men have and know a little more about it.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

Do not be uneasy; there is nothing to fear; I will undertake to cure her. . . . But we are wasting precious time; the night is passing, and we shall get nothing done. . . . (*To the GIRLS*) Come, dears, go and dress yourselves; your cloaks are waiting for you and everything is ready. Just follow Light, who will advise you. . . . We will meet in the great ballroom of the palace. . . . (*The GIRLS go out, preceded by LIGHT. To DESTINY*) You too, Destiny, follow Light, you want another costume. You can't go as you are. One must not be conspicuous, especially at this moment. (*DESTINY obeys, grudgingly.*) . . . I don't quite know how to dress the fellow. However, Light will think of something: she has more imagination than I. . . . Let's see to the little patient. She's better. . . . (*Helping her to rise*) There, there. . . . Sit down on this bench. . . . No? . . . You prefer to stand up?

The Betrothal ;

. . . As you please · in that case, lean against the column, for the walls will soon disappear. . . . Now that we are alone, Tytyl, will you tell me at last, between ourselves, who that girl is ? . . .

TYLTYL

But, ma'am, I don't know at all. . . .

THE FAIRY

You must make an effort. . . . She can't live unless you remember who she is. . . . It's a great responsibility.

TYLTYL

But it's not my fault. . . . I've done what I could , I can't make it out.

THE FAIRY

So much the worse for you. I can't understand it either. . . . Come, get dressed. Here's the little jacket which Light brought you. . . . And now, with one stroke of the wand, we will enter the ballroom and see what your sweethearts have made of

or, The Blue Bird Chooses
themselves. (*She touches the panels
of the closet, which disappear.*)

SCENE 4.—*A Ballroom in the Fairy's Palace*

*All that remains standing is the columns
and aisles forming the portico of an
immense, luminous room, which might
have been hewn and carved out of
a mountain of amber. Under the
dazzling arches the SIX GIRLS move
about, arrayed in resplendent, trailing
gowns, with their feet encased in gilt
sandals, their hair hanging loose and
their hands filled with flowers. They
beckon joyously to TYLTYL, who, at
first dumbfounded, rushes towards them
and joins in their games and dances.
THE VEILED GIRL alone stands on one
side, leaning against the column.*

THE FAIRY (*observing DESTINY, draped in a
long black cape, with a broad-brimmed
Spanish sombrero on his head*)

I say, there's Destiny! . . . She has
dressed him like the villain in a

The Betrothal

play! . . . (*Clapping her hands.*)
Come, children, it is time to be
starting. . . . All this doesn't count :
the real work is about to begin. . . .

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE I.—*Before the Curtain representing
Rocks*

(*Enter TYLTYL and LIGHT*)

TYLTYL (*out of breath, dropping on to a
boulder*)

They live a long way up, the Ancestors!
. . . Aren't you tired?

LIGHT

No, I was born in the mountains.

TYLTYL (*bending over a crevice*)

You're not like Destiny, who has almost
given out. . . . He's still at the
bottom of the last precipice, with my
little sweethearts. . . . He stumbles at
every step and is limping badly. . . .
They won't be here yet awhile; and
I am very glad to have a moment
alone with you, before they come,

The Betrothal ;

for I have a lot of things to ask you. . . .

LIGHT

Ask me anything you like, dear ; I will do my best to answer.

TYLTYL

What do you think of those sweethearts of mine ? . . . If you had to choose, which would you take ? . . .

LIGHT

I like them all, but it is not for me to choose ; no one but yourself can tell which one you love best.

TYLTYL

Ah, that's not so easy ! . . . You see, I love them all ! . . . For instance, I love little Jalline, the beggar's daughter : she is so gentle and sweet, such a darling ! . . .

LIGHT

Yes, she is very attractive : a pretty little creature, with a pure and simple mind. . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL

But I also love the mayor's daughter, Rosarelle. . . . She is really very beautiful, not a bit conceited, and much better-educated than the others. . . . And then think of what she has done: she has left everything to go with me. . . .

LIGHT

Yes, that is the proof of a real love. . . .

TYLTYL

But I also love Roselle, the inn-keeper's daughter. . . . She's a very pretty girl, so healthy and strong and frank and brave and cheerful and amusing: you can't think how kind and affectionate she is. . . .

LIGHT

Yes, she has qualities; and I too find her very sympathetic. . . .

TYLTYL

But I also love the wood-cutter's daughter, Milette. . . . She has such beautiful

The Betrothal ;

eyes and hair ! . . . At first she seems a little 'awkward, a little shy ; but it's quite different when you know her : she is really very playful and full of fun. . . . And then, have you noticed her mouth and her teeth ?

LIGHT

Yes, I've noticed them. . . .

TYLTYL

But I also love Belline, the butcher's daughter. . . . To begin with, she's my cousin ; and one always loves one's cousins. And then there's something about her dark, beautiful eyes that frightens me rather. I adore that. . . . But she's not unkind, not at all. . . . Have you noticed her smile ? One can never tell exactly what it means. . . .

LIGHT

Yes, she has a strange smile. . . .

TYLTYL

But I also love the miller's daughter, Aimette. . . . To begin with, she's

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

also my cousin. . . . She keeps her eyes lowered under her long, curling lashes ; she blushes if you look at her and weeps if you speak to her. . . . She looks a little silly ; well, she's not that at all. She's quite different when you know her a bit. . . . She's very bright and very jolly and whispers such nice, sweet things to you that you at once want to kiss her. . . .

LIGHT

I can see that the choice will not be easy.

TYLTYL

Which do you think the best ?

LIGHT

There are neither better nor worse ; each one is as good as the other ; and all are good when they suffer or when they love.

TYLTYL

The nuisance is that it seems you mustn't love more than one. . . . Tell me,

The Betrothal ;

though, is that true, or is it only one of the things people say to children just to keep them quiet ?

LIGHT

No, it's true. When you love many, that merely shows that you haven't yet found the one whom you were to love.

TYLTYL

But, after all, you, who know everything and see everything, must know better than I and can tell me what I ought to do.

LIGHT

No, dear, that is beyond me, beyond the range of my sight. It is for this very reason that we are going to consult those who do know ; and they are near at hand, because it is in you that they live. We seem to be taking a great journey : that is an illusion ; we are not going outside yourself and all our adventures are happening within you. . . . But

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

I hear your sweethearts. Where is your green hat ?

TYLTYL

Here. I took it off because I felt hot.

LIGHT

Put it on again quickly, so that there may be no more misunderstandings, and turn the sapphire.

(He does so. Forthwith, on every side, all sorts of monsters emerge from the ground and from between the rocks : monsters with more or less human or animal shapes and grotesque, brutish or repulsive faces. They hustle TYLTYL, gather together and dance round him.)

TYLTYL (*terrified*)

Hullo, hullo, what's all this ? . . .

LIGHT

Nothing. You must have turned the sapphire from left to right.

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL

So I did, I believe : I forgot. . . . But what do they want with me ? They are pushing up against me and snapping at my feet.

LIGHT

They won't hurt you. They are merely your own thoughts, which you sometimes secretly think ; now you have set them free and they are showing themselves for an instant as they are.

TYLTYL

What ! . . . Are my thoughts as ugly as that ? . . . I should never have believed it ! . . .

LIGHT

Don't take it so much to heart ! . . . They are not as ugly as some, because you are still innocent and very young. . . . If you were to see those of other men ! . . . Besides, you have beautiful ones ; but they are more reluctant to show themselves.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

. . . However, I see the girls coming. . . . Turn the sapphire from right to left, so that we may get rid of these monsters, whom they must not see. . . .

(He does so ; and the THOUGHTS go back into the ground. Enter the SIX GIRLS, preceded by DESTINY and followed at a distance by THE WHITE PHANTOM, who keeps on one side. They surround TYLTYL, overwhelming him with caresses and all speaking at the same time.)

THE GIRLS

Good evening, Tytyl ! . . . We've found you again ! . . . We were so anxious about you ! . . . We couldn't keep up with you. . . . Aren't you tired ? . . . May we kiss you ? . . . Destiny held us back. . . . I wanted to run. . . . He stood in the way. . . . Aren't you too hot ? . . . Mind you don't catch cold. . . . Kiss me

The Betrothal ;

too ! . . . And me too ! . . . And
me too ! . . .

TYLTYL (*distributing kisses all round*)

My sweethearts ! . . . What darlings you
are and how happy I feel ! . . . I
hope I have not made you walk too
fast ? . . . You must forgive me ;
I am rather in a hurry. . . . Jalline
dear, you haven't hurt your foot,
have you ? . . . And you, Rosarelle ?
You are not used to climbing rocks.
. . . . Aimette's hands are cold and
Roselle has made herself much too
hot. . . .

LIGHT

Come, we will talk about all this later.
We must now hasten to the An-
cestors, who are waiting for us and
would be very much annoyed if we
arrived late. . . .

DESTINY (*who has grown smaller still and is
now hardly taller than a man of average
height. He seems very tired, and sits
buddled on a boulder*)

Not a step farther ! . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL

Hullo! You've grown a bit smaller
again! . . .

DESTINY

I? I've not changed. I am always the
same. I am . . .

TYLTYL

I know, I know. . . . It's Light being so
near, perhaps. . . .

DESTINY

Light and I have nothing in common. . . .
In any event, I alone am master
and I order a halt. . . .

LIGHT

By all means; there is no need to go any
farther. We have arrived; we are
here without taking another step,
at the abode of the Ancestors. . . .
*(The Curtain parts and opens upon
the next Scene.)*

The Betrothal ;

SCENE 2.—*The Abode of the Ancestors*

A large open space, under an Elysian light which imparts to all things an aspect of ethereal and lasting felicity and unchanging gladness. The back and the two sides of the square are formed of houses of different periods, some stately, some lowly, but all radiant and a little unreal. In the foreground, on the right, for instance, is the entrance to the cottage of TYLTYL's grandparents ; next comes the gable of a farm-house of older date ; then the front of a little eighteenth-century shop ; and thus in succession, running from right to left and across the back, a seventeenth-century town-house, a sixteenth-century prison, tavern and hospital ; a fifteenth-century mansion ; some thirteenth-century hovels ; a twelfth-century church ; a Gallo-Roman farm and villa ; and so on. Intersecting the background at the middle is a street in endless perspective,

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

bordered with the very oldest habitations and leading to the huts and caves of primitive man. In the foreground are a few stone benches standing under fine trees, laurels, plane-trees or cypresses.

(TYLTYL, LIGHT, DESTINY, and the SIX GIRLS come forward, followed at a distance by THE WHITE PHANTOM, who keeps to one side as usual. They have taken but a few steps when GAFFER and GRANNY TYL come hurrying out of their cottage and, with exclamations of delight, throw themselves into TYLTYL's arms.)

GRANNY TYL

Tyltyl! Tyltyl! . . . Gracious, you again! . . . But this time it's not a surprise. We were expecting you; we were told three days ago. . . . All the same, though, we're so glad to see you that it's difficult to believe at first. . . . But how big and strong you've grown, dear! And so good-

The Betrothal ;

looking I should never have known you ! . . . Oh dear, how nice it is to get a kiss like this now and again ! . . .

GAFFER TYL

Haven't you brought Mytyl this time ? . . .

GRANNY TYL

Of course he hasn't ; you know it's not her turn yet. . . . We know what you're here for, Tylyl : it's not to see us ! You needn't blush, you young rascal, you scamp ! . . . There, there, you're quite right ; and the sooner you set about it the better. . . . So it's one of these girls they have to choose ?

TYLTYL

Yes, Granny, it seems so.

GAFFER TYL (*eyeing them like an expert*)

Ho, ho ! . . . And, my word, a very nice lot, too ! My compliments ! I admire your taste. . . . (*Pointing to ROSELLE*) If I were you, I'd choose

or, The Blue Bird Chooses
that one: she's the prettiest and
the plumpest.

GRANNY TYL

Hold your tongue; no one's asking your
advice: you know you've no say in
the matter. We're still too young;
we've hardly begun to get cold and
haven't had time yet to pick up
things. . . . It takes so long; there's
so much to learn! . . . But the
others, especially the oldest, who now
are the youngest: it's they who
know everything. . . .

TYLTYL

What? The oldest are the youngest in
this country? . . .

GRANNY TYL

Yes, it seems one gets younger as one
grows older. . . . I'm beginning to
notice it myself.

TYLTYL

That's odd. . . . But where on earth are
they? . . . I see nobody. . . .

The Betrothal ;

GAFFER TYL

They'll come very soon. . . . I wonder
they're not here yet. . . .

TYLTYL

Are there many of them ?

GRANNY TYL

What do you think ! All your ancestors
since the world began ! There'd be
so many that we shouldn't know
where to put them ! . . . But we
shall only see a few of them. A good
many are travelling in other worlds ;
and, as a fact, some of the oldest are
always away. But those who are on
the spot choose in the name of all.
They always agree ; and it seems
they very seldom make a mistake. . . .
But here's one coming out of his
house. You see the little man shut-
ting up his shop ?

*(A spruce little MAN is seen
leaving the eighteenth-
century shop.)*

TYLTYL

Who's he ?

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

GRANNY TYL

It's your grandfather's grandfather ; he was a grocer at Versailles in the reign of Louis the Fifteenth.

TYLTYL

What funny clothes !

GRANNY TYL

He has put on the things which he wore in his shop. . . . Here, as a general thing, the weather is so mild, the air so warm and balmy, that we've no need to dress ourselves ; but you wouldn't be able to see us if we had no clothes ; and so, in your honour, we've put on those we used to wear on earth. . . . It'll be quite amusing : some of them date back ever so far. . . . Look, there they come, out of the houses they once lived in. . . .

(Enter from the town-house a CITIZEN of the time of Louis XIV. ; from the sixteenth-century prison a PRISONER still wearing chains and irons on his

The Betrothal ;

feet and hands. His shackles now seem to be light and cause him no inconvenience. He attracts TYLTYL's attention.)

TYLTYL

Who is that one ? Was he chained up ?

GRANNY TYL

Yes, he is one of your ancestors who spent nearly all his life in prison.

TYLTYL

It's nothing to boast of ; he'd have done better to stay at home.

GRANNY TYL

He did nothing wrong. He used to steal bread or other bits of food to keep his children from starving. He suffered a great deal ; we think a lot of him. . . .

(The ANCESTORS continue to leave their houses. An imposing and richly-dressed MAN appears on the threshold of the fifteenth-century mansion.)

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL (*pointing to him*)

And that one ?

GAFFER TYL

That one is the richest. . . . It appears we were very rich at one time, but that didn't last. . . . However, it doesn't matter here : the only thing that counts, it seems, is what a man has done or thought. . . . For instance, you see those beggars over there, coming out of the church ?

(Enter from the twelfth-century church some four or five BEGGARS, clad in rags pitiful in themselves but idealized by the fairy atmosphere.)

TYLTYL

Yes, any number of them.

GAFFER TYL

Well, it seems that several generations of us were beggars. . . . We succeeded one another, father and son, at the same church and in the same porch. It was very good for us, they say.

The Betrothal ;

It taught us patience, resignation, endurance, temperance and the habit of never catching cold. . . . But do you see the oldest, the one who looks poorest of all ?

TYLTYL

The one with the beautiful white beard ?

GAFFER TYL

Precisely. . . . Well, he's the Great Mendicant, the one whom we respect most, first because he has an iron constitution and next because he appears to have thought a very great deal in his corner outside the church. . . . They say it's he who did most to develop our brains.

TYLTYL

But I don't see any women among them. Where are their wives ? Weren't they married ?

GRANNY TYL

Of course they were ; but there's nothing for us women to do to-day. The men choose the women and the

or, The Blue Bird Chooses
women the men. . . . When Mytyl
comes, it will be our turn.

TYLTYL

Look, there are three more.

*(A diseased MAN comes out of the
hospital; A SECOND MAN,
carrying a bottle and looking
rather tipsy, out of the tavern;
and, lastly, out of the prison,
a THIRD MAN hairy and
savage of aspect, brandishing
a bloodstained knife.)*

GAFFER TYL *(dismayed)*

I don't like this. . . . It's very tiresome
that they should have been told. . . .

TYLTYL

Why, who are they ?

GAFFER TYL

An ugly lot, those three : the sick man,
the drunkard and the murderer. . . .
They've done us a deal of harm.

TYLTYL

Then there was a murderer in the family ?

The Betrothal ;

GAFFER TYL

Of course, as in every family. Fortunately, none of the three has much influence over us. As you see, they are small and sickly ; they shrink from century to century and are nothing like as healthy as the others. . . . But it won't do for them to meddle in your choice. . . . If the Great Peasant, the Great Mendicant and the Great Ancestor are there, all will go well ; the others won't dare to breathe a word : if not, they will try to force their choice upon you and that will be a bad thing for you and for the future of the entire family.

(Enter from the old farm-house a tall PEASANT, dressed in the mediæval style. He closes the door carefully and steps forward, whittling a switch.)

GAFFER TYL

Here comes the Great Peasant ! That's good, that's good !

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL

That long, thin fellow ?

GAFFER TYL

He certainly isn't fat ; but he has great influence. He's one of the main-stays of the family.

(Next enter, from the villa, one or two GALLO-ROMANS and then, from the back of the street, among other MEN OF THE STONE AGE, an exceedingly tall OLD MAN, dressed in skins and leaning on a heavy club.)

TYLTYL

Why, we've got right back to savages now !

GAFFER TYL

That's the one !

TYLTYL

Who ?

GAFFER TYL

The Great Ancestor !

TYLTYL

What ? The one like an ape, with the big stick ?

The Betrothal ;

GAFFER TYL

You *must* be quiet ! . . . Don't treat him with disrespect ! . . . It's a great favour that he's showing you ; he doesn't often go out. . . . Of all our race he's the most important, the greatest, the most respected. . . . Everything's shaping well : it'll probably be he, the Great Peasant and the Great Mendicant who will put their heads together and choose your bride for you.

TYLTYL (*indignantly*)

But I won't have that ! . . . It doesn't concern them ! . . . What do they know about it ? . . . A peasant, a savage and 'a beggar : what next ?

GAFFER TYL

Hold your tongue, I say ! . . . I tell you, they represent all that is best in you and in the whole family. If you obey them, if you submit to their influence, you will be happy and safe. . . . Mind now ! They're coming. . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

(The ANCESTORS have been gradually collecting at the back of the stage. They bow, accost one another, shake hands, exchange compliments. All show affectionate respect to THE GREAT PEASANT, THE GREAT MENDICANT and especially THE GREAT ANCESTOR, gathering around them and listening deferentially to what they say. On the other hand, THE SICK MAN, THE DRUNKARD and THE MURDERER are left standing apart, forming a lamentable rear-guard. The group now moves towards the benches in the foreground, where TYLTYL and his companions are gathered.)

THE GREAT ANCESTOR *(coming forward)*
Good evening, Tytyl!

TYLTYL
Good evening . . . sir!

The Betrothal ;

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Kiss me first. Don't be afraid. I look rather savage, but it is only a shape which I had to put on in order to make myself visible to you. I had no other handy. . . . But I am really quite clean and I don't smell bad.

TYLTYL

I never said you did !

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

No, but to judge by the grimace you made you weren't quite sure ! . . .
(Sitting down on the middle bench.) I will sit down here ; the Great Mendicant will take his seat on my right and the Great Peasant on my left. They don't smell either. . . . *(THE GREAT MENDICANT and THE GREAT PEASANT take their seats ; the other ANCESTORS stand behind him.)* And I will take you on my knees. . . . I am glad to hold you in my arms for a moment. . . . We have known each other so long !

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL

I don't remember ever seeing you before.

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

And yet we have always lived in each other; for you were already living in me when I was on earth; and now I live in you while you are still on that same earth, which we seem to have quitted. . . . But what do you think of this place of ours? . . . Let me have the pleasure of showing you over your home.

TYLTYL

My home?

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Certainly. . . . You are at home here. . . . And a very nice home it is. . . . Everything that you see—this square, that prison, the church, those houses, we who live in them—all this is really only inside yourself. . . . People rarely see it, they don't even suspect it, but it's true.

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL

I should never have thought there was so much room inside myself and that it was so large. . . .

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

It's much larger really ; there's a great deal that you don't see. . . . But that is not what interests us to-day ; let us come straight to the point, to the great question that brings you here. . . . We are going to choose the woman whom you are to love. . . .

TYLTYL

Since you are so kind, there's one thing I should like to ask you. . . .

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Ask me any questions you please.

TYLTYL

How is it that I have not, like other men, the right to choose the woman I love ?

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

But you have the right to choose and are here for the sole purpose of making that choice.

TYLTYL

No, they tell me that it's you and the others who will make it.

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

But I and the others are all you. . . .
You are we, we are you; and it's all the same thing.

TYLTYL

Not for me. . . . They keep on telling me to hold my tongue, that it's not my business, that it's no concern of mine. . . . Everybody's allowed to get a word in, except me. . . . I've had enough, I'm sick and tired of it! . . . Where do I come in? That's what I want to know!

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

You're simply acting as all men act when they think they are doing what they want to do.

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL

But, after all, dash it, what business is it of yours ? I can understand, in a way, that the children I may one day have should claim some right to select their mother ; but the rest of you, over here, what difference can it make to you ?

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Don't you see that it's all the same ? Those who have lived in you live in you just as much as those who are going to. There is no difference, it all connects and it's still the same family.

TYLTYL

As you please, but I can't make it out. . . . And, if I refuse to obey, if I love just for myself, if I take a different girl from the one they want to force on me, what will they do then, what will happen ?

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Merely this, that the choice you will

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

have made for yourself, without our approval, will not be a real choice ; in other words, you will not love the woman whom you thought you loved. You will have made a mistake, you will be unhappy and, at the same time, you will make all of us unhappy, those who came before you as well as those who come after.

TYLTYL

Does that often happen ?

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Very often, far too often : that is why you see so many unhappy people on earth.

TYLTYL

Well, what am I to do ?

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Where are your sweethearts ? . . .

Would you mind coming a little nearer, dear ladies ? . . . (*Gazing with attention at the SIX GIRLS, who come forward and stand in front of them.*) Well, well, you have set us

The Betrothal ;

our task, but you have made it very difficult : how is one to select when all are equally beautiful ?

THE GREAT MENDICANT

They are really very handsome.

THE GREAT PEASANT

And they appear to be very healthy, very quiet and very hard-working.

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Do you recognize the one among them for whom we are waiting ?

THE GREAT MENDICANT

Not yet.

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

It's strange, neither do I. . . . (To THE GREAT PEASANT) And you ?

THE GREAT PEASANT

I can't say that I don't and I can't say that I do.

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

It's strange, very strange. And yet we

or, The Blue Bird Chooses
know that the one who will make us
happy has arrived and is here among
us. We generally recognize her at
the very first glance.

THE GREAT MENDICANT

I can't understand it.

THE RICH ANCESTOR (*standing behind the
bench, pointing to ROSARELLE*)

Isn't it that one ? . . . What's your name,
my dear ?

ROSARELLE

Rosarelle.

THE RICH ANCESTOR

Who are you ?

ROSARELLE

The daughter of the Mayor.

THE RICH ANCESTOR

Are you rich ?

ROSARELLE

My father has money, I believe.

THE RICH ANCESTOR

You see ? There is no doubt about it.

The Betrothal ;

THE SICK ANCESTOR (*pointing to*
AIMETTE)

I say it's that one.

THE DRUNKEN ANCESTOR (*taking hold of*
ROSELLE)

This is the one I want.

THE MURDERER ANCESTOR (*leaping over*
the bench and taking hold of BELLINE)
And I take this one !

THE GREAT ANCESTOR (*rising, in an*
authoritative tone)

Be silent . . . and withdraw ! . . . (*With*
an imperious gesture) Begone ! . . .
You know that you have lost the right
to raise your voice in my presence ! . . .
(*The FOUR DISSENTIENT AN-*
CESTORS, addressed in these
terms, move away 'crestfallen.')

THE OTHER ANCESTORS (*grouped behind the*
bench, clapping their hands)

Bravo ! Bravo ! . . . Well done ! . . .
It's what they deserve ! . . . They
have been wrong too often ! . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

They have done too much harm!
. . . They would be the ruin of the
family! . . .

JALLINE (*going to THE GREAT MENDICANT
and clasping his knees*)

Perhaps I'm the one . . . I love him
so!

MILETTE (*going to THE GREAT PEASANT
and clasping his knees*)

If you want to know how much I love
him, look at me and see.

AIMETTE (*going to THE GREAT ANCESTOR
and clasping his knees*)

Can't you see that I have loved him
longer than the others? I have loved
him since I first set eyes on him. I
never dared to say so; but I feel
that I shall die if you choose another.

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

My poor little children, it is very sad,
but my hands are tied. You will
perhaps cry for a few hours; but, if

The Betrothal ;

we chose one of you, she would spend her whole life crying, for I do not see among you the one for whom we are waiting. . . . Tytyl !

TYLTYL

Yes ?

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Have you brought us no one else, besides those we see here ?

TYLTYL

No, no one else.

THE GREAT MENDICANT

I see a tall white figure over there, against a tree ; who is it ?

TYLTYL

I really don't know. - She follows us all the time, squeezes in wherever we go ; nobody knows her ; and we can't get rid of her.

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Go and fetch her.

(TYLTYL *fetches* THE WHITE PHANTOM *and brings her back, holding her by the hand.*)

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Who are you ?

TYLTYL

It's no use asking her. She never answers ;
she can't talk.

THE GREAT ANCESTOR (*to THE PHANTOM*)

Come nearer, child, and let me lift the
veil that covers your face. . . .
(*He removes the veil. Her face
appears, absolutely white, featureless
and devoid of human expression.*) She
has no face. . . . (*To the OTHER AN-
CESTORS standing around them*) Do
you know her ?

THE GREAT PEASANT

She has no expression

THE GREAT MENDICANT

She has no features. . . . She is like an
unfinished statue.

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

What are we to do ? It must be she.
But who is she ? She is not dead,
or we should know it. . . . Come,

The Betrothal ;

Tyltyl, make an effort, for everything depends on you. You must remember . . .

TYLTYL

I have tried my utmost. . . . Do what I will, I can't remember at all.

THE GREAT ANCESTOR

Listen, it is a serious matter. If we do not succeed in recognizing her, all your life, all your happiness on earth will be nothing more than a phantom like herself. . . . There is one last resource, one last hope, which is that the children who are to be born of you may discover who she is and that she is to be their mother. They see much farther and deeper than we. But there is no time to lose ; for this waiting and this living in suspense are very dangerous for her. We must be quick, therefore ; we must not waste a moment. . . . Go, my little Tyltyl. You have been very good and patient, very obedient

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

and faithful to your race throughout this ordeal. Take this kiss and farewell. . . . You too, my dears, let me give you a parting kiss. Do not be too sad ; another happiness awaits you. There is more than one kind on that poor misguided earth of yours. You have deserved every happiness that it can give. . . . Good-bye, my little daughters ; good-bye, good-bye, my son. And we will meet again whenever you wish : you know where to find us and we shall be waiting for you. . . .

(The Scene grows dark and disappears from view ; the Curtain of Rocks closes ; and TYLTYL, his companions, LIGHT and DESTINY are once more alone among the boulders.)

DESTINY (*seizing TYLTYL's hand*)

This way, this way ! . . . Thanks to me, it went off very well ! . . . I said nothing about it ; but it was I who

The Betrothal

foresaw everything and planned everything; and all that has been done was ordained by me. . . .

(They all go out.)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE I.—*Before the Curtain representing
the Milky Way*

(*Enter TYLTYL and LIGHT*)

TYLTYL

Where are we ?

LIGHT

Near to the stars and yet within yourself.
Before you is the great veil of the
Milky Way. Beyond it stretches the
region in which your unborn children
are waiting to show you the mother
whom they have chosen.

TYLTYL

It's a little like the Kingdom of the
Future in "The Blue Bird."

LIGHT

Perhaps ; and yet not quite the same
thing. There it was the whole

The Betrothal ;
kingdom, with everybody's children ;
here it is only a province, in which
are no children but yours.

TYLTYL

Have I many ?

LIGHT

As many children as you have ancestors,
as innumerable and no less infinite.
But, as with the Ancestors, we shall
see only those who are nearest to
you, especially the youngest and
smallest.

TYLTYL

Why the smallest ?

LIGHT

Because they are the nearest to their birth.
As this approaches, they grow smaller
and younger ; so that the youngest,
who are the first to be born, can
hardly walk or stand.

TYLTYL

And the others ? Are there any big
ones ?

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

LIGHT

There are children of all sizes, but I do not know that we shall see the biggest, that is to say, those who will be born hundreds or thousands of years hence. . . . There will not have been time to tell them; they do not keep close to the doors, like the very little ones, but wander far away, waiting for their time to come.

TYLTYL

They must find it very tiresome to be kept waiting like that !

LIGHT

Nothing is ever tiresome in infinity. . . . Besides, they have to learn here all that they will forget on earth.

TYLTYL

It seems hardly worth while, then, to take so much trouble !

LIGHT

Oh, but it is ! Something always remains

The Betrothal ;

and helps to build up the deep happiness of life.

TYLTYL

Well, so much the better for them ! As for me, I shall pretty soon know what I am to do. I hope we shall get ' finished to-day, ' because, you see, I'd like to have things settled. But where on earth can they be, those girls of mine and Destiny ? (*Looking below him, on the right.*) The poor little dears are up to their knees in the snow. This place is even higher and more difficult to get at than where the Ancestors lived.

LIGHT (*looking down*)

They are not very far away. . . . But you have taken off your hat again ; that's a bad habit of yours. Put it on quickly, before they come, and be careful to make no mistake this time ; for, if you do, the result may be very unpleasant.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

(TYLTYL *puts on his hat and turns the sapphire. Forthwith from the earth and from every side little CREATURES of different sizes appear, dressed like him and resembling him in nearly every respect. They surround him, rush against him, hustle him, and try to drag him, some to the right, others to the left, while he struggles in the midst of them without knowing to which he should give his attention.*)

TYLTYL (*distraught*)

Hullo, hullo, what's all this? What does it mean? That sapphire really is becoming impossible!

LIGHT

Don't worry: you'll have turned it the wrong way again. What did you do?

TYLTYL

How can I tell? . . . This is getting

The Betrothal ;

too much for me ! Too mixed up, really ! . . . I must have pressed it instead of turning it.

LIGHT

That's what I thought. You have simply released some of your other " You's."

TYLTYL (*dumbfounded*)

Some of my other " Me's " ? . . .

LIGHT

Yes, what I mean is that you are not alone inside yourself and that . . .

TYLTYL (*more and more dumbfounded*)

I am not alone inside myself ? . . .

LIGHT

Why, no, there are a number of other personalities there, more or less like you and all the time trying to get the upper hand.

TYLTYL

No, but really, what else is there inside me ? I must be a sort of menagerie or Noah's ark ! There's no end to it !

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

LIGHT

That's true: there would be no end if we had the time to go into it all. . . . But press the sapphire down now and all will be well.

(TYLTYL *presses the sapphire and all his DOUBLES disappear.*)

TYLTYL

My word! A good riddance! . . . Well, as you say, they may be the least bit like me, but some of them are very ugly. Particularly a big dark one, who kept on tripping me up and nearly made me fall.

LIGHT

Of course, there are some of all kinds, as in every man. One must learn how to choose the best and avoid the worst. . . . But here come your sweethearts.

(*Enter first* THE WHITE PHANTOM)

TYLTYL (*amazed*)

Hullo! . . . What's the matter with

The Betrothal ;

her ? . . . She seems quite in a hurry to-day and moves like an angel.

(Enter next MILETTE, BELLINE, ROSELLE and ROSARELLE, followed by AIMETTE and JALLINE, who are supporting DESTINY between them. He is now a head shorter than TYLTYL, wears the same tragic costume as before, seems very weary and sinks down on a heap of snow.)

TYLTYL *(going to him, with a certain solicitude)*

Are you ill ?

DESTINY

I ? Not at all : I am always the same, I am unchangeable. . . . But when you alone are responsible for everything, when you have to manage everything, direct everything and foresee everything and when nobody helps you *(casting an aggressive eye on LIGHT)*, you are entitled to a moment's rest. . . . I therefore order

or, The Blue Bird Chooses
a halt. It is decided irrevocably :
to-day we go no farther.

LIGHT

Admirable ! And so it shall be, for we
have arrived ; and, with Destiny's
permission, we shall find ourselves,
without taking another step, among
the children who are awaiting us. . . .
(*The Curtain parts and opens upon
the next Scene.*)

SCENE 2.—*The Abode of the Children*

*The immense halls, the lofty vaults, the
infinite perspectives of arches and
columns of the Kingdom of the Future
in The Blue Bird ; but this time,
it being the nuptial hour, everything
is of a soft, milky white, gleaming and
transparent. The radiant shapes of
amber-coloured light bathe in unspeak-
able gladness all the things that they
touch ; and everywhere are signs of
a deep and unfaltering joy. The*

The Betrothal ;

boundless horizon stretches towards the veiled white of the Milky Way, the ether quivering with myriads of unknown stars.

(When the Curtain opens, TYLTYL, LIGHT, DESTINY and the SIX GIRLS are in the foreground, on the right, at the foot of one of the alabaster columns supporting the entrance-arch. They take a few steps into the immense, deserted hall, while THE WHITE PHANTOM hides timidly behind the column.)

TYLTYL *(a little disappointed)*

There's nobody here ! . . .

LIGHT

I know why. There are several doors ; as you were all very tired, I chose the one that was nearest. They are probably waiting for us at the principal entrance.

TYLTYL

How shall we let them know ?

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

LIGHT

The atmosphere will do that : here everything is known immediately and every event happens everywhere at the same moment. . . .

TYLTYL

It's a very fine place, this : splendid large rooms and a good high ceiling ; lots of light and air. . . .

LIGHT

And it's still always inside yourself.

TYLTYL

What, is this inside me too ?

LIGHT

Why, yes, of course it is. . . .

TYLTYL

Very well, then ; that's all right. Please step in : you're very welcome. Won't you sit down while you wait ?

LIGHT

We shall not have long to wait, for I believe they have seen us.

The Betrothal ;

(A CHILD's head appears for an instant between two columns and is then briskly withdrawn, exclaiming, "This way! This way! They're here!" Soon after, seven or eight CHILDREN of about twelve years of age, in short white tunics, with bare arms, legs and feet, run up from the back of the hall and stop in front of the visitors. THE BIGGEST holds out his hand to TYLTYL.)

THE CHILD

Good evening, grandpapa !

TYLTYL

Grandpapa ? . . . Who's that ? . . .
Where is he ? . . .

THE CHILD (*bursting into laughter*)

Why, it's you !

TYLTYL (*dumbfounded*)

I ? Am I a grandpapa already ?

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE CHILD

Of course you are, eighty times over ! . . .
We are the first to arrive. The
others are on their way. . . . (*To the*
OTHER CHILDREN) He doesn't seem
to believe it !

ANOTHER CHILD

You might give us a kiss.

TYLTYL (*kissing them all*)

I will ! I will ! . . . But how do I come
to be a grandpapa ?

THE CHILD

Surely it's quite simple : you will be
our grandpapa when we are your
grandchildren.

TYLTYL

Obviously, that's clear. . . . So you exist
already ?

THE CHILD

Naturally, since you yourself exist. . . .
I say, are those the grandmamas
you're bringing us ?

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL

Yes ; it seems you're to pick out the best one.

ANOTHER CHILD (*clapping his hands and dancing for joy*)

Oh, how pretty they are ! . . . (*Throwing himself into JALLINE's arms*) I take this one, because she is so soft ! . . .

ANOTHER CHILD (*throwing his arms round AIMETTE's neck*)

And I this one, because she is so sad ! . . .

ANOTHER CHILD (*kissing ROSELLE*)

I choose this one, because she's always laughing ! . . .

THREE OTHER CHILDREN (*each taking one of the GIRLS, kissing and fondling her and laughing and skipping with delight*)

And I choose this one, because she smells so nice ! . . . I choose this one ! . . . I choose this one ! . . .

THE FIRST CHILD (*intervening*)

One moment, one moment, if you please.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

. . . This has nothing to do with us ; our turn will come. You know that only the smallest have the right to choose who is to be their mother. All we have to do is to help them with our advice and to stop them if they make mistakes ; but that's a thing which has never happened yet. They were quite some distance away, at the principal gate, but they won't be long now.

TYLTYL

Here come some bigger ones !

(Enter a new group of CHILDREN, apparently about fifteen years of age. The oldest goes to TYLTYL and shakes hands with him.)

THE OLDEST CHILD

Good evening, great-grandfather ! . . .

TYLTYL

Who's that ? I ? I'm a great-grandfather now, am I ? . . .

The Betrothal ;

THE OLDEST CHILD

Of course you are ! . . . I am very glad to see you for a minute, for we shall most likely not have the pleasure of meeting on earth. . . . Well, I understand that your visit to the Ancestors was not much of a success.

TYLTYL

Let's rather put it that they hadn't quite made up their minds. But how is it that you already know what happened there ?

THE OLDEST CHILD

Why, of course we know everything that happens inside you ; we're there ourselves. Besides, there's very little that separates us from the Ancestors : our interests are the same and our paths often meet.

THE FIRST CHILD

Look out ! Here are the little ones ! . . . I see five coming. . . . There's only one missing, the smallest. . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

*(From the back of the balls come
FIVE LITTLE CHILDREN, hold-
ing one another's hands.)*

TYLTYL

Who are those five little ones? They
are very sweet.

THE FIRST CHILD

Why, they are your children: two boys
and three girls!

TYLTYL

Mine? Shall I have five children?

THE FIRST CHILD

Six; you will have six, for the last little
one isn't here yet. . . . I promise
you, the world can do with them,
after what people have been up to,
down there! . . .

TYLTYL

But I shall never be able to feed them
all! . . .

*(The FIVE LITTLE ONES, still
holding hands, have stopped*

The Betrothal ;

*in front of the SIX GIRLS
and stand looking at them
solemnly, without speaking.
By degrees, the halls have
become filled with a host of
OTHER CHILDREN, who gather
round the FIVE LITTLE ONES
and watch them. The silence
at last becomes irksome and
TYLTYL breaks it)*

TYLTYL

Well, children, aren't you going to kiss
your papa ?

THE YOUNGEST CHILD (*ordering him to be
silent with a serious gesture*)

Mamma first. . . . Where is she ?

TYLTYL

Why, she must be here ; she's one of
those. You have only to choose.

THE YOUNGEST CHILD (*to the one beside
him*)

Do you see her ?

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE OTHER (*shaking his head sadly*)

No.

THE THREE OTHERS (*in succession*)

No more do I. . . . No more do I. . . .

No more do I. . . .

JALLINE (*rushing forward, catching hold of one of the CHILDREN and kissing him*)

But that's impossible! . . . Here, look at me? . . . Don't you see how much I'll love you? . . .

THE CHILD

Yes, but you're not the one.

ROSELLE (*taking another CHILD on her knees*)

And me? Won't you have me for your mamma?

THE CHILD

No, no; it's not you.

ROSARELLE (*catching hold of another CHILD*)

And me? Don't you love me? You'll see how happy we shall be! . . . We shall have a lovely house full of

The Betrothal ;

toys and I shall give you everything
you want. . . .

THE CHILD (*vainly trying to contain its
tears*)

No, no ! . . .

BELLINE (*taking THE YOUNGEST*)

Look here, you seem to know more than
the others. . . . Don't you recog-
nize me ? . . . Are you fond of
sweets ? . . .

THE YOUNGEST CHILD (*struggling until she
lets him go and crying without disguise*)

Let me go ! Let me go !

TYLTYL

Here's a pretty business ! He's crying !
. . . And the other one as well !
. . . But what do they want ? . . .
They're very hard to please. . . .

(THE YOUNGEST CHILD *wipes his
eyes and takes the hand of
the next, who does the same
by his neighbour, until they
all hold hands again.*)

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE YOUNGEST CHILD

Come! . . .

(*The FIVE LITTLE CHILDREN
move away with sober dig-
nity and go out on the left.*)

TYLTYL

What's the matter with them? Where
are they going?

ONE OF THE BIG CHILDREN

They are going to the other door.

ANOTHER

They are going to fetch the smallest of
them all.

ANOTHER

The smaller they are, the more they know.

THE FIRST CHILD

But where is he, the smallest one?
Haven't you seen him?

ANOTHER

No, no one has seen him since this
morning. . . . It's strange, for he is
always with his little sisters.

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL (*looking at the throng of CHILDREN
filling the halls*)

How many there are !

ONE OF THE BIG CHILDREN

It's only one part of the family.

A CHILD (*which has been following the
progress of the FIVE CHILDREN with
his eyes*)

They are stopping at the third door.

TYLTYL

Who ?

THE CHILD

The five little ones.

ANOTHER CHILD

They seem to be looking for something.

THE FIRST CHILD

Let us go and see what they're doing.
They know what they know.

OTHER CHILDREN

Yes, yes; let us all go. . . . They know,
they know !

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

(A great stir in the crowd of CHILDREN. They all run in the same direction and go out on the left. In a moment the hall is emptied of all except TYLTYL, LIGHT, the SIX GIRLS and DESTINY.)

TYLTYL

Let us go after them too !

(He goes out, followed by LIGHT and the SIX GIRLS, with DESTINY bringing up the rear. The only occupant of the stage is THE WHITE PHANTOM, whom everybody has overlooked and who has not left the column on the right against which she has been leaning. The stage remains empty for a moment and then, from the back of the halls, comes a CHILD even smaller than the youngest of the FIVE LITTLE ONES. He walks with a resolute

The Betrothal ;

step ; on reaching the columns in the foreground, he appears to take his bearings, turns his head to right and left and then suddenly goes straight to THE WHITE PHANTOM, in front of whom he stops and takes up his stand, contemplating her at length, gravely and silently, with his finger in his mouth. At last he puts out one hand and takes THE PHANTOM by the hem of her dress.)

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL

Is it . . . really you ?

THE PHANTOM (*speaking for the first time and struggling to find her voice, which seems to come from far away and to stick in her throat*) *

Yes.

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL

I knew it. Come. . . .

THE PHANTOM

Where to ?

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL
Over here. . . . I'm going to tell the
others. . . .

THE PHANTOM
Not yet. . . . I can't yet. . . .

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL (*still dragging
her by her dress towards a marble
bench which stands between the columns
in the foreground*)

Come. . . . (*He makes her sit down, settles
her on the bench, caresses her and kisses
her.*) Come. . . . It's you. . . . I
knew it. . . . I'm kissing you. . . .
Don't you know how to kiss yet?
(*THE PHANTOM shakes her head.*)
No? . . . Like this. . . . I'll teach
you. . . . (*He kisses and caresses her
slowly and deliberately.*) You're no
longer cold?

THE PHANTOM (*smiling at last*)
No.
THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL (*still
kissing her*)

You see, that's better already.

The Betrothal ;

(Under THE CHILD'S kisses and caresses, THE STATUE has gradually taken life : the eyes open, the lips flutter, the face begins to colour, the body loses its terrible stiffness, the arms become supple and circle round THE CHILD'S neck.)

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL (*nestling against her*)

You're better, aren't you ? . . . Not sleepy any more ? . . . How good it is, being together ! . . . They're still looking for you, you know. . . . And it's I who found you ! . . . I knew, I knew. . . .

THE PHANTOM

So did I, so did I. . . . I was waiting. . . .

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL

It's splendid, isn't it ? . . . (*Nestling more closely.*) Oh, what fun ! . . . Do you like it too ?

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

THE PHANTOM

Yes. . . . Yes, I am happy.

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL

Why aren't you laughing ?

THE PHANTOM

Because I am too happy.

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL

So am I, so am I ! . . . Don't look : I'm
going to cry a little, but it doesn't
mean anything. . . .

THE PHANTOM (*beginning to return his
kisses and caresses*)

I'm going to cry too.

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL (*intoxicated
with rapture*)

You're kissing me ! . . . Mummy ! . . .
Then it's true, then it's true, it *is*
you ! . . . Again, again ! . . . No,
not any more : I can't bear it ! . . .
Will they understand, will they be
able to understand ?

THE PHANTOM

Call them, it is time.

The Betrothal ;

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL

Don't cover your face: they wouldn't see it and they wouldn't believe me. . . . (*Drawing aside the veils*) Oh, mummy, how lovely you are! . . . (*Her hair spreads over her shoulders.*) Oh, mummy, your hair! . . . What lots of it! . . . There, that's much better. I can kiss you better so. . . . (*Listening*) Listen, they're coming back! They're here!

(*The FIVE LITTLE ONES come rushing headlong into the hall.*)

THE FIVE LITTLE ONES

Where is she? . . . Where is she? . . .
Where is she? . . .

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL (*standing up on the bench beside his MOTHER, showing her to the others and dancing with delight*)

Here! Here! . . . She's here, she's here! . . . I found her! . . .

(*THE MOTHER tries to rise and*

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

take them in her arms, but they do not give her time. They fling themselves upon her, load her with kisses and caresses, make her sit down again and clamber on her knees, swarming and scrambling over her and all speaking together.)

THE FIVE LITTLE ONES

It's she! . . . It's she! . . . It's mummy! . . . Where was she? . . . Did you know her? . . . I should think so! I should think so! . . . You too? . . . Yes, I too, I too! . . . You're taking up all the room! . . . You're kissing her all the time! . . . It's not fair, it's my turn! . . . She's my mummy too! . . . We looked for you so hard! . . . We waited for you so long! . . . She is lovely, isn't she? . . . She's the loveliest of them all! . . . There's no one like her! . . . Tell us, tell us! . . . What? . . . I love

The Betrothal ;

you ! . . . Do you love me ? . . .
Kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss ! . . . What sweet
things mummies are ! . . . How de-
licious it is to kiss ! . . . To think
one didn't know ! . . . All for us,
all for us ! . . . The only happiness !
. . . You're everything in the world
to us, we're everything in the world
to you ! . . . I dote on you ! . . .
I say, do you know me ? I shall be
the second. . . . And I the third.
. . . And I the last ! Kiss me first,
I shall have longest to wait ! . . .
She's laughing ! . . . She's happy
too ! . . . Answer us, speak to us !
. . . Your arm, I want to feel your
arm round my neck ! . . . Mine too,
mine too ! . . . Don't go away, what-
ever you do ! . . . We don't know where
we are ; we're mad with delight ! . . .
We can't wait any longer ! . . .

*(While they are thus kissing and
talking, the other, BIGGER
CHILDREN, those of the future
generations, gradually return
and fill the halls again. The*

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

first arrivals stop behind the group formed by THE MOTHER and the SIX LITTLE ONES; and whispers are heard and rise from the growing crowd: "They've found her! . . . They've found her! . . . It's she! . . . How happy they are! . . . How beautiful she is! . . . How kind she looks! . . . Can we kiss her? . . . Wait, wait, it's their turn now! . . . Ours will come!" . . . TYLTYL, followed by LIGHT, the SIX GIRLS, and DESTINY, now enters the hall. THE CHILDREN fall back to let him pass. THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL sees him first, goes to him and, taking him by the hand, leads him to THE MOTHER.)

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL (*gravely*)
It is she. . . . I found her. . . .

The Betrothal ;

(THE MOTHER *rises and stands in front of TYLTYL.*)

ANOTHER LITTLE ONE

Do you recognize her ?

(TYLTYL *hesitates, passes his hand over his forehead, vainly searches his memory.*)

TYLTYL

Not yet. . . . She's beautiful !

ANOTHER LITTLE ONE

Kiss her ; it's she.

ANOTHER LITTLE ONE

There is no other.

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL

We want no other.

TYLTYL (*taking THE MOTHER'S hand*)

Where do you come from ? . . . Who are you ? . . . Where have I seen you before ? . . . I can't remember. . . .

(THE MOTHER *does not reply.*
Her colour comes and goes,

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

*her eyes open and shut, her
life fluctuates with the ebb
and flow of the memory which
she is striving to awaken.)*

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL

Take care ! You're hurting her !

*(The OTHER LITTLE ONES form a
line in front of her, as though
to defend her.)*

A LITTLE ONE

Go away !

ANOTHER LITTLE ONE

Go away ! You sha'n't have her until
you know her !

ANOTHER LITTLE ONE

You sha'n't have any other !

ANOTHER LITTLE ONE

Go away ! She shall stay with us till
you know !

ANOTHER LITTLE ONE

Go away ! We'll wait for you ; we shall
all be down there !

The Betrothal ;

THE FIRST LITTLE ONE

Go away, go away ! . . . You're hurting her dreadfully !

THE SMALLEST OF THEM ALL (*embracing his MOTHER*)

Come, mummy, come ! . . . He doesn't know yet ! . . .

(*They all gather and press closely round their MOTHER, hurrying and dragging her along and waving good-bye to TYLTYL : " See you soon ! See you soon again ! . . . Down there, down there ! . . . See you soon ! " . . .*

THE MOTHER turns and gazes fixedly at TYLTYL ; then the outlines of the hall darken, lose their colour and distinctness, dissolve and disappear. Only TYLTYL, LIGHT, DESTINY and the SIX GIRLS remain in front of the Curtain representing the Milky Way.)

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL

Well, I'm in a nice mess ! . . . What am I to do ? . . . Is it my fault if I can't remember ? . . .

LIGHT

Don't be afraid. They know what they are saying. You will find her again. . . . Let us go, quickly ! . . . I am sure that she is waiting for you where you least expect her.

TYLTYL (*dreamily*)

She really is beautiful ! . . . I believe they are right. . . . I believe it's really she. . . .

(*They all go out*)

CURTAIN

ACT V

SCENE I.—*Before the Curtain representing
the Edge of a Forest*

(*Enter TYLTYL and LIGHT*)

LIGHT

Here we are at last.

TYLTYL

Where ?

LIGHT

Why, near your home! . . . Don't you
recognize your forest ?

TYLTYL

My forest, my forest ? . . . (*Looking
around him.*) Why, so it is! . . .
I've seen those beeches before, some-
where.

LIGHT

That's more than likely, as they're close
to the house where you were born.

The Blue Bird Chooses

TYLTYL

Well, it's about time I did get home. I am tired out.

LIGHT

It has been a fatiguing journey, but not without results.

TYLTYL

Results ? . . . Where ? . . . When we started, I was in love with six girls ; now we've returned, I love only one ; and she's just the one who hasn't come back with me. . . . But where are those six others and what are they doing ? And Destiny too ? He was looking very ill. . . .

LIGHT

Here they are !

(Enter the SIX GIRLS. The last, JALLINE, carries DESTINY, who still wears his cloak and sombrero, but who has shrunk to the dimensions of quite a small child and appears very tired.)

The Betrothal ;

JALLINE (*passing DESTINY to MILETTE*)
Will you take him for a moment ? He's
not very big, but dreadfully heavy.

MILETTE (*taking him from JALLINE's arms*)
Come to me, my little Tiny, come ;
there, don't cry. . . .

DESTINY (*in a whining baby voice*)
Me ? . . . I never cwy ! . . . I'm
always the thame ! . . . I'm un-
thakable, immovable, indefatigable,
implacable, and inegthowable ! . . .

MILETTE

Yes, yes, Tiny, we know, you're a very
good little boy. . . . (*DESTINY falls
asleep in her arms.*) He's gone to
sleep !

JALLINE (*wrapping him in his cape, with a
motherly gesture*)

He's a dear, sweet, obedient little thing,
but he seems very tired.

LIGHT

Poor little Destiny ! . . . He has no
luck ! . . . But we will see to him

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

later. . . . What we have to do now, my children, is to bid one another good-bye . . . and for the last time. . . .

TYLTYL

For the last time ! . . .

LIGHT

Why, yes ; we can't spend our whole life travelling ! Besides, you are near your homes, since you all of you live round the forest. We have learned what we sought and we know what we wanted to know, that man is granted only one love, and the others are merely unfortunate errors that bring sorrow to innumerable lives. . . . You were all about to choose wrongly ; and you may rejoice, therefore, even now, when we have to part, that the mistake was discovered before it was too late. . . . And, more than this, the Fairy has charged me with glad tidings for you all : the one love you have each of you sought is waiting for you by your

The Betrothal ;

own fireside, in your own home, or at least will be there very soon. . . . So do not linger, but hasten to meet it. . . . The hour grows late ; soon the cocks will be crowing ; the birds are beginning to wake. Let us bid one another good-bye, quickly, without regret, without sad thoughts or tears. . . .

MILETTE (*handing DESTINY to AIMETTE*)

Just take him for a minute, while I kiss Tylyl. . . . (*Kissing TYLTYL*) Good-bye, Tylyl dear. I must go first. Dad gets up early and there would be awful trouble if he didn't find me in the house. Good-bye. Let me kiss you again. . . . Be nice to me when we meet : we're neighbours and shall have to spend all our lives in the forest.

TYLTYL (*kissing her affectionately*)

Be nice to you, Milette ? Of course I will ! It's not your fault or mine : we both know that.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

MILETTE

Good-bye, good-bye! . . . I must fly!
(*She runs out.*)

AIMETTE (*handing DESTINY to JALLINE*)

Take hold of the little man for a second,
will you? (*Kissing TYLTYL*)
Good-bye, Tytyl. . . . Don't let us
forget each other. . . . I shall per-
haps love somebody else; but I shall
never love him as I loved you.

LIGHT

Come, come; you are wasting time. . . .

We shall never have done if we go
on like this. . . . If the cock crows
before you return, your parents will
know everything; and then they'll
be angry. . . . Just give him a
sisterly kiss: that's all that's neces-
sary. . . . You're not going far; and
you'll meet again many a time, in
real life, and will like each other
the better because of your truer
knowledge. . . .

(*ROSARELLE and BELLINE kiss*)

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL *without speaking, and go out.* ROSELLE *blows her nose vigorously, dabs at her eyes and stammers,* "My dear Tyltyl! My dear Tyltyl! . . . He was so nice! . . . I shall see you again, sha'n't I, I shall see you again? . . . You shall have the best of everything at the inn!" Then she rushes out. JALLINE *alone lingers behind, holding DESTINY in her arms.)*

LIGHT

Well, Jalline, what are you doing here ?

JALLINE

I can't go away at once just like the others. . . .

LIGHT

But you must, dear Jalline. Not because it is fate, as men say, but because it is the will of those who know everything and who never die. . . . Good-

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

bye, my little Jalline. You have been very sweet, very loving, very exquisite; and I thought that you would be chosen. . . . Don't cry, dear. Hand over poor little Destiny to me, I will take care of him; and give Tytyl a long, long kiss. . . .

JALLINE (*hands DESTINY to LIGHT and gives TYLTYL a long kiss*)

Good-bye, Tytyl!

TYLTYL

Good-bye, Jalline!

(JALLINE *moves away with slow, reluctant steps.*)

LIGHT

And, now that we are alone, let me kiss you too. . . . We shall meet once again to take another and a longer journey. . . .

TYLTYL

Another journey? And a longer one?

LIGHT

The last, the happiest and the most

The Betrothal ;

beautiful. But I am not allowed to speak of it yet. . . . Good-bye, Tytyl. Remember, dear, that you are not alone in this world and that all that you see in it has neither beginning nor end. With this thought in your heart, letting it grow with your growth, you will always know, whatever may happen, the right thing to say, the right thing to hope for. . . . And you, Tiny, don't cry like that ! Some day we shall begin to understand each other.

DESTINY (*half-asleep, tearfully, lisping*)

Me ? I never cwy ! . . . I order a thtop ! . . . Forward ! Forward ! Forward !

(*LIGHT goes out on the left, carrying DESTINY in her arms. TYLTYL follows her a little way, waving his hand in farewell ; and the Curtain opens on the last Scene.*)

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

SCENE 2.—*The Awakening*

The same scene as in Act I. TYLTYL is sound asleep. The light trickles gaily through all the crannies of the closed shutters. The Blue Bird is singing madly in his cage. A knock at the door.

TYLTYL (*waking with a start*)
Who's there ?

MUMMY TYL (*behind the door*)
It's me! . . . Open the door quickly!
. . . We're expecting a visitor. . . .

TYLTYL
Wait, wait, till I slip on my breeches. . . .
(*Rising and seeing with amazement that he is dressed*) Hullo, I've gone to bed with my clothes on! How did I come to do that? . . .

(*He opens the door. Enter MUMMY TYL fussily, carrying a bundle of sticks.*)

The Betrothal ;

MUMMY TYL

Quick, quick! . . . Help me light the fire and tidy the room. . . . Go and wake up Mytyl. . . . They'll be here in a minute.

TYLTYL (*doing his best to help her*)

Who's "they?"

MUMMY TYL

Of course, you don't know. Daddy Tyl met' them yesterday, but you had gone to bed. . . . Do open the shutters, I can't see what I'm doing. . . . (TYLTYL *opens the shutters and the daylight floods the room.*) And call Mytyl, so that she can help me to get things straight. . . . What a mess. . . . And the dust! I can't let them see my house like this.
(*Enter MYTYL.*)

TYLTYL

Hallo, there Mytyl is! . . . But you haven't told me . . .

MUMMY TYL (*to MYTYL*)

The fire's beginning to burn up: . . .

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

You make the coffee, while I start cleaning. . . . What's this? More cabbage-leaves under the tap!

MUTYL

It's not my fault. Tytyl promised me . . .

MUMMY TYL

Well I never! A nice thing! . . . It's a blessing that I came to look for myself! . . . Take the broom, Tytyl, while I give a rub to the plates and put them away.

TYLTYL

But look here who's coming? Is it the Shah of Persia or the Emperor of China?

MUMMY TYL

Much better than that. You'll never guess. . . . Do you remember our neighbour?

TYLTYL

What neighbour?

MUMMY TYL

There aren't so many of 'em. . . . The

The Betrothal ;

one with the pretty little pink house,
by the road-side, and a garden full
of sunflowers and hollyhocks.

TYLTYL

Of course ! . . . And they had a little
girl to whom I gave my dove ?

MUMMY TYL

That's right.

TYLTYL

They've been gone a long time.

MUMMY TYL

Five or six years, that's all. They went
to the town to live with the girl's
uncle. He was a widower, with no
children of his own, and has died and
left them all his money. They told
Daddy Tyl they're coming back here
for good, going into their nice little
house again. It belonged to little
Joy's uncle.

TYLTYL

Little Joy ?

MUMMY TYL

Yes, yes, you know: that's the little

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

girl's name. They used to call her Jojo when she was small; but her name is Joy. Daddy Tyl met her last night, says that he could hardly believe his eyes, that she's taller than you and beautiful . . . well, there! . . . With hair like gold, real gold! That's worth thinking about. . . . So I want the house to be tidy and all of us to look decent and respectable. . . . You can never tell what may happen. We're of good stock too. Your grandfather's father was a pork-butcher.

TYLTYL

It's curious, I didn't meet him.

MUMMY TYL

Whom ?

TYLTYL

My grandfather's father.

MUMMY TYL

That's not to be wondered at : he's been dead these fifty-seven years.

The Betrothal ;

TYLTYL (*sweeping the floor lustily*)

Perhaps I had better put on my Sunday clothes ?

MUMMY TYL

No, you needn't ; you're all right as you are. We'll just lay the white tablecloth. . . . Besides, there's no time now ; here they come ; I can hear them walking up the path.

(*A knock at the door. MUMMY TYL opens it. Enter THE NEIGHBOUR and JOY, followed by DADDY TYL with his axe on his shoulder.*)

DADDY TYL (*calling from the threshold*)

Here they are ! Here they are !

THE NEIGHBOUR

Yes, it's Joy and I, Madame Tyl. . . . Good morning. A Merry Christmas and good luck to everybody, as my poor husband used to say when he was alive. . . . I'm glad to see you looking so well. . . . And these are the children ? Don't tell me that

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

this great, big, pretty girl is Mytyl ?
And can that be Tytyl, that strap-
ping young fellow who looks so
smart ?

MUMMY TYL

Yes, yes, Madame Berlingot, they're the
sort that keep on shooting up till
you don't know where you are.
Tytyl hasn't grown as much as his
sister, but he's stronger. There's
not a sturdier lad in all the country-
side. . . . But it's your young lady
who's beautiful ! . . . She looks the
very picture of the blessed saints !
. . . (*Observing TYLTYL, who stands
wide-eyed and entranced*) Now then,
Tytyl, where are your manners ?
Don't you know your little play-
mate ? Be civil, say how-do-you-do,
shake hands and give her a chair.

DADDY TYL

Before you sit down, would you like to
see the cows ?

THE NEIGHBOUR

What, do you keep cows, now ?

The Betrothal ;

DADDY TYL

Why, yes ; we've not done so badly either. . . . Two little cows and a calf. . . . Little cows are better than big ones ; and they only eat half as much. . . . One of them, the red one, gives us twenty quarts of milk every day.

THE NEIGHBOUR

Then you've put up a cow-house ? You hadn't one before.

DADDY TYL

Yes ; I ran it up myself, with Tylyl to help. . . . (*Leading her towards the door on the left*) It's this way ; we made a good job of it and it's quite worth seeing.

THE NEIGHBOUR

Dear me, yes ; I'd like to see it at once.

(*They all go out, except TYLTYL and JOY, who remain standing face to face. As soon as they are gone, TYLTYL goes*

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

*up to Joy and takes her
hand.)*

TYLTYL

Is it . . . really you ?

Joy

Yes, it's I.

TYLTYL

I knew you at once.

Joy

And I you.

TYLTYL

You are even more beautiful than up
there.

Joy

You too.

TYLTYL

I say, it's funny that I couldn't re-
member. . . .

Joy

I hadn't forgotten.

TYLTYL

Oh, how lovely you are ! . . . Let me
kiss you.

The Betrothal ;

JOY

You may if you like.

*(They kiss each other awkwardly
but affectionately.)*

TYLTYL

They haven't a suspicion.

JOY

You think that ?

TYLTYL

I'm sure of it. They don't know what
we know. But the little ones knew.

JOY

What little ones ?

TYLTYL

The little ones up there. . . . They
were very clever. They knew you
at once. . . . Were you so very
unhappy ?

JOY

Why ?

TYLTYL

Because I couldn't remember.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

Joy

It wasn't your fault.

TYLTYL

I know, but I hated it. . . . And you
were so pale, so dreadfully pale ;
and you never spoke. . . . How long
had you loved me ?

Joy

Ever since I first saw you, when you gave
me the Blue Bird.

TYLTYL

So have I, so have I, but I had forgotten.
. . . Never mind : we're going to
be tremendously happy, for they've
settled it, you see ; they want it.

Joy

Do you think they've done it on purpose ?

TYLTYL

I'm quite sure ; there isn't a doubt. . . .
Everybody wanted it, but especially
the little ones, all six of them.

The Betrothal ;

JOY

Oh !

TYLTYL

Yes ! . . . We're going to have six ! . . .
I say, do you believe it ?

JOY

Six what ?

TYLTYL

Why, six children, of course !

JOY

Oh, Tyltyl !

TYLTYL

I know it's a great many ; but we'll
manage somehow. There's nothing
to be afraid of. . . . What a dream,
eh ?

JOY

Yes.

TYLTYL

The loveliest I ever had. And you ?

JOY

Yes.

TYLTYL

I saw you as you are now, just like that.

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

But here, all the same, you are more real and more beautiful. . . . Oh, I must kiss you again !

(They kiss each other lingeringly.

At that moment DADDY TYL opens the door, with the others behind him.)

DADDY TYL *(catching them in the act)*

Well, I never ! . . . You're getting on, you two ! . . . Not losing much time, are you ?

THE NEIGHBOUR *(entering with MUMMY TYL and MYTYL)*

What's the matter ?

DADDY TYL

What did I say, when we were looking at the rabbits ? These two are made for each other. . . . They were kissing away like anything !

THE NEIGHBOUR

Joy ! Aren't you ashamed ?

Joy

But, mummy . . .

The Betrothal ;

DADDY TYL

Come, come, there's no great harm in it. We did as much, Mummy Tyl and I, when we were young, didn't we, old lady ?

MUMMY TYL

We did indeed ! . . . They make such a pretty pair ! . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

That they do ; but Joy is still very young and I'd like to think it over.

DADDY TYL

That's right enough. . . . He's very young too ; but you won't find a better boy in the whole countryside. . . . He's a strong, healthy lad, with a civil tongue in his head, and he works like a nigger. . . . Think it over by all means. Only, as this is a holiday, there's no harm in their kissing each other ; and let's see them do it : it's good for one ! . . .
(*Seeing that TYLTYL and JOY do not*

or, The Blue Bird Chooses

move, he pushes them close together)

Well? . . . Look at them: they
don't want to now!

TYLTYL (*in a whisper, to JOY, as he kisses
her*)

It was better when we were by ourselves,
wasn't it?

JOY (*also whispering*)

Yes, it was!

TYLTYL

They were right, weren't they?

JOY

Who?

TYLTYL

The others.

JOY

Yes.

TYLTYL

Don't say a word to any one: it is our
secret, yours and mine. . . .

~~CURTAIN~~

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